

Industrial Worker

JULY 1996

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EDUCATION

ORGANIZATION

EMANCIPATION

Bay Area Labor News...

Hillhaven Workers Win Union Contract

A two-year battle in California by 2,000 nursing home workers, represented by the Service Employees International Union, against Vencor/Hillhaven, a national chain of nursing home capitalists, culminated in a contract on May 22. Members of Health Care Workers Locals 250, 339 and 22 had been without contracts for 23 months at 25 California Vencor/Hillhaven facilities.

Company resistance was broken in the last few months by three one-day strikes in the San Francisco Bay Area, and street marches and several days of noisy, militant street demonstrations in San Francisco's downtown business district, in which members of many different unions took part. A number of Bay Area Wobblies were part of that solidarity, and were among the dozens of protesters arrested on the streets.

The contract agreements, including a master three-year pact, as well as several two-year special contracts, were ratified by the SEIU rank and file. The contracts provided for a 7 percent annual wage increase to the workers, who had been making an average of \$6.40 an hour. Workers affected include licensed vocational nurses, certified nurse assistants, and laundry, dietary and housekeeping staff.

In another major point of contention, the union will be given a voice in a new worker-management committee on patient care, according to Local 250 president Sal Rosselli. A prime beef had been the V/H profits-before-patients practices, that hospitals had been shipping sub-acute patients (those with heart attacks, strokes, or recent surgery) to convalescent homes where pay scales are cheaper. But the SEIU, which also represents hospital workers, said V/H workers were not properly trained to treat such patients. Under the agreement, workers are supposed to be able to address training as well as other issues in the new joint patient care committee. (We live in a predatory capitalist society where the ruling class calls most of the shots, and "jointism" is often a detriment to the workers' cause if it's just going to be a "jawboning" committee with workers having no teeth to implement their positions.)

Workers who had been fired for taking part in one-day strikes and other actions are

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A young girl glances at the writing on the wall demanding freedom for Zapatista political prisoners.

Sixteen people accused of being Zapatistas are still being held by the Mexican government; two others were released in early June, after the EZLN announced it would not resume negotiations until they were freed.

photo: Langel/NFN

The People and the Land Under Siege in Chiapas

Special Eyewitness Report

As we go to press, a Mexican judge has freed two alleged Zapatista rebels from jail, opening the way for stalled peace talks between the guerrillas and the government to resume.

Javier Elorriaga and Sebastian Entzin were sentenced May 2 to long jail terms on the basis of a statement from a witness who never appeared in court despite six summonses. Rebel leader Subcommander Marcos said June 1 that the Zapatistas

would not resume peace talks with the government until the two were freed.

They had been in jail since February 1995, when Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo launched a crackdown against the rebel forces. Elorriaga, a television journalist who also had served as a go-between between Zedillo and the Zapatistas, denied ever belonging to the proscribed guerrilla movement. Several others are still jailed.

The Native Forest Network went to

Chiapas, Mexico for a Research Expedition in parts of March and April of this year. This trip to Chiapas was dedicated to fellow worker Michael Kozura of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) who recently met an untimely death. The following are some observations of that journey into one of North America's last remaining tropical rainforests and where a struggle for human dignity by indigenous insurgents has given hope worldwide.

Article on page 6

Bosses Face Long, Hot Summer

More than 100,000 German public sector workers joined warning strikes May 20, bringing public transport in several cities to a standstill to press their claims for a 4.5 percent pay rise. The strikes were the latest in a series against government plans to impose a wage freeze as part of a drive to cut public spending.

Public transport in Cologne, the North Rhine Westphalia region's largest city, came to a complete halt as workers stayed away or walked out for several hours during the morning rush hour. Services in Bonn, Duesseldorf, Leverkusen and Bochum also ground to a standstill.

Berlin postal workers also staged short strikes leaving 160,000 homes without a postal delivery, and tram and bus drivers in Freiburg and Konstanz, southwestern Germany, stayed away from work for several hours. Public transport in the northern city of Hanover was also disrupted.

On May 21, nurses and hospital orderlies joined bus drivers, garbage men, postal workers and civil servants in a nationwide campaign of short protest strikes. Despite a government-imposed "cooling-off period" set to end June 12, thousands of transport workers joined wildcat strikes May 24. The OeTV public sector union described the actions as spontaneous protests over a pay offer it condemned as a "provocation."

Dieter Schulte, head of the German trade union federation, has warned of a "hot summer" of industrial protest, with major

strikes by airport, bank and transport workers if the government does not abandon its austerity program.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl has proposed cutting nearly \$40 billion from government spending. The proposed cuts include pension cuts (higher retirement age, reduced health benefits, etc.), cutting sick pay to 80 percent of basic wages for the first six weeks of illness and to 10 percent for long-term illness (full pay for workers while sick is one of the prized gains won by IG Metall in the 1950s), and exempting most employers from restrictions on lay-offs. In addition, Kohl has called for a general wage freeze, and for reduced taxes on the wealthy.

The German government is thus joining the ranks of governments around the world which have been slashing social services and attacking workers' living stan-

dards in order to appease increasingly insatiable capitalist demands. German workers have announced their refusal to be sacrificed on the altar of higher profits. If they stick to this determination, they have the power to prevail.

French Unions Stage Warning Strikes

Angered by the government's continued refusal to abandon its emphasis on "austerity" and retrenchment policies, or even to consider alternative proposals put forward by French unions, French workers are threatening another round of strikes, stoppages and demonstrations. The protests began May 23 with marches by white-collar unions to demand reduced working hours. Police and teachers marched through Paris May 29 in

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In This Issue...

Machine Shop Workers Turn to IWW

Canadian Teens Organize

Police Fire on Strikers

Union Scabbing Imperils L.A. Truckers Strike

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The IWW Preamble

After months of agitation I called for a meeting with a group of workers for the express purpose of organizing an IWW branch. It was decided that we hold the meeting in the evening at the county park while it was still daylight. Because the constitution is the machinery that we will work by and as per Article II Sec. 2, I made the constitution of the IWW the first item on the agenda. The meeting immediately burst into controversy upon reading the Preamble. These workers were simply not ready to "abolish the wage system" and to "overthrow the capitalist system." Well, now, the super-duper revolutionary may claim that I had fallen in with a bunch of lumpen proletarians. However, this is not the case. We gathered together to form a union, not to venture into the unknown. Forced to change gears from union organizer to theoretician for a utopian cause, I could see that the opportunity to form a union was lost and would have to wait another day. With the setting of the sun, the meeting was adjourned.

Surely I am not saying that we abandon our true purpose as a union. But at the same time we do not have amongst us a Eugene Debs to expound the theory of Revolutionary Unionism. I am saying that we should word our Preamble in simpler terms for the average worker. Take note of this! If we can not spell out our Preamble in its clearest terms, our enemies, using their own interpretation, will use it as a club with which to beat out our brains.

If we were to reword our Preamble from "abolish the wage system" to "claim

Readers' Soapbox

the full value of our labor," it would be more palatable and still mean the same thing. Also, when the worker is able to "claim the full value of his labor" he automatically puts the capitalist out of business. Of course, to reach this plateau we must first form a union. A union with a principle of "An injury to one is an injury to all." Once we have this machinery in place, we can Educate, Agitate and Organize to that level where the worker will realize the full value of his labor. If this is our course, then let's make the first step as easy as possible.

Richard D. Neill

Editor's Reply: While abolishing the wage system and overthrowing the capitalist system seems to me fairly clear, I have no idea what could possibly be meant by claiming the "full value of our labor." Production is an intrinsically social activity, in which it is impossible to separate out the contribution of any individual worker or group of workers and determine its "value." Certainly we need to be prepared to explain our ideas and our critique of the capitalist system to our fellow workers. Perhaps we need new lit-

erature to do this more effectively. But human freedom

and economic justice will be possible only when we have abolished the wage system.

Slave Labor

Under the Washington State Legislature's 2010 bill, the state is now taking 35 percent of all prisoners' incoming money. This is to force inmates to pay to be in prison, and pay for food, and for a crime victims' fund.

In sentencing, defendants are usually ordered to pay court costs and the crime victims' fund. Now we have to pay the courts and the Department of Corrections twice.

There are juveniles in here who are working in a child slave labor environment. Before incarceration these juveniles couldn't work a 40 hour work week, but since they were tried as adults they're forced to (though they're not allowed to buy tobacco because they are underage).

Christian Peña 701346 NB440
Airway Heights Correction Center
POB 1839, Airway Heights, WA 99001

IWW Not Anarchist

In the June issue you responded to my letter acknowledging, to some extent, that the IWW was not an anarchist organization, but you claim there are "many anarchists" in it. As there are only a few hundred IWW members, I would disagree that there are many anarchists in it. A similar assessment of the identity of IWW members could, by your standards, claim that there are many socialists in the IWW, etc. It is sectarian arrogance to continue trying to label this union as anarchist as this will offend many existing members and prevent many workers from joining. In spite of your acknowledgment the IWW continues to ooze sympathy for anarchism and anarchist groups to an extent that I see it as an obstacle to recruitment - there just aren't that many anarchists to recruit in this neck of the woods.

Leaving aside such trivia as how many equals 'many,' I would like to know who decides on the ideological positions that litter the *Industrial Worker*. Assuming that this paper doesn't produce itself, then you must write some articles; select and decide on other articles; be responsible for reprinting articles from other publications; decide

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I.W.W. DIRECTORY

Job Branch= 5 or more members in workplace
GMB=General Membership Branch
IU=Industrial Union Del=Delegate
GOC= Organizing Committee.

IU 330: Building Construction Workers
IU 450: Print & Publishing House Workers
IU 460: Food Processing Workers
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers
IU 610: Health Service Workers
IU 620: Education Workers
IU 630: Entertainment Workers
IU 660: General Distribution Workers
IU 670: Public Service Workers

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Regional IWW- PO Box 508, Moss Vale 2577 Wobbly@xchange.apana.org.au

CANADA

MANITOBA

Winnipeg GMB- B. Mackay, PO Box 3204, GNPO, R3C 4E7

ONTARIO

Ottawa GMB- 388 1/2 Kent, K2P 2A9. 613/231-2922 <indwrk@web.apc.org>
Toronto Group- 11 Andrews Ave M6J 1S2. 416/941-9945 Meets 1st Thurs 7 pm; phone for location.

BRITISH ISLES

Regional Organising Committee- 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 4WB, tel no 0116-266-1835

ENGLAND

London Group and IU 530 Couriers Union- BM Box 4529, London WC1N 3XX, 0171-358-9124
Oxford branch- c/o Oxford Claimants and Unemployed Workers Union, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford
Health Workers IU 610 and Suffolk IWW- del Harry Girling, c/o Ipswich Community Resource Centre, 16 Old Foundry Road, Ipswich IP4 2DU

Swindon Region GMB and Research Councils IU 620 group- del: Kevin Brandstatter, 9 Omdurman Street, Swindon SN2 1HA, 01793-610707

General Distribution Workers IU 660 and Kent IWW- del: Ray Carr, 40 Cornwallis Circle, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DU

SCOTLAND

Stevenson College IU 620 Branch- Rm 3.05 Bankhead Avenue, Sighthill, Edinburgh

WALES

Aberystwyth IWW- c/o 14b Vulcan Street, Aberystwyth, ph: 01970-624 590

IRELAND

Co. Wicklow IWW- PO Box 20, Bray, Co Wicklow. Del: Bob Cullen.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles GMB- Meets 2nd, 4th Sundays.

Location call (24hr): 213/368-4604. Andrew Willett 1724 Westmoreland Blvd., LA 90006.
IU630 Film Workers- Miguel Sanchez, 1748 Clinton St. Los Angeles 90026 213/368-4604 <fwo@mach1.directnet.com>

Mendocino- Bill Meyers, del. 707/884-1818.
San Diego Group- P.O. Box 907, San Diego 92112-0907. 619/284-WOBS

Santa Cruz GMB- PO Box 534, 95061
IU450 New Earth Press Job Shop- 1921 Ashby Berkeley 94703 510/549-0176

UCB Recyclers IU620 Job Shop-504 Eshleman Berkely 94720 510/642-4895. del.s: Monica Berini, Liam Flynn, Charles Long

IU670 Berkeley Recycling Ctr. Job Shop- del: Jojo Mends, 1231 Second St., Berkeley 94710
San Francisco Bay Area GMB- PO Box 40485, S.F. 94140. e-mail: sfgmb@iww.org Offices: Redstone Building, 2940 16th St. (at Capp), #216-2, San Francisco 94103 415/863-WOBS
Long Haul Resource Center, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 94705 510/845-0540. Mon, Thurs 4-7 p.m., Tues, Wed, Fri 3-6, Sun. 6-9p.m. GMB meets 3rd Saturdays at Long Haul, 1:30 p.m., Open Delegates Meeting 1st Saturdays at Long Haul, 1:30 p.m. General Organizing Committee meets 4th Saturdays at the San Francisco office. GDC meetings as needed contact: 510/549-0358.

COLORADO

IU450 P&L Printing Job Shop- 2298 Clay, Denver 80211. 303/433-1852
Denver/Boulder- Del: Cliff Sundstrom 303/832-7602. Brendan Ruiz, POB 370663, 80237-0663

GEORGIA

Atlanta Group- George Nikas, 11 Clarendon Pl., Avondale Estates 30002. gnikas@unix.cc.emory.edu Lorenzo Ervin Kom'boa- 673 Wylie St. SE, 30316.

HAWAII

O'ahu GMB- PO Box 11928, Honolulu 96828; 808/247-8584; wilcox@uhunix.uhcc.hawaii.edu

ILLINOIS

Chicago GMB- 1340 W Irving Park Road #287 60613. 312/549-5045. Meets 1st Sunday 3 pm (call for location).

MARYLAND

Baltimore GMB- Del. Rafie Bey, PO Box 8882, 21224-0882. 410/367-3024

MASSACHUSETTS

IU630 GOC- Jim Barclay, 75A Elm St. Worcester 01609

Boston Area GMB- PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139. del: Steve Kellerman 617/469-5162 Meets 2nd Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. at Lucy Parsons Center, Central Square, Cambridge.

MICHIGAN

SE Mich. GMB- 103 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti 48197. 313/483-3548
IU630 Workers Stories Workers Lives Job Shop- Albert Parsons 313/769-0695
IU670 Ann Arbor Tenants Union Job Shop- 4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor 48109. 313/

763-6876.

MINNESOTA

Duluth GMB- 8 N. 2nd Ave E., #301, Duluth 55803 218/723-7887.

MISSISSIPPI

Gulfport Group- C.G.Streuly 601/896-3515.

MISSOURI

St. Louis GMB- c/o Bob Tibbs, Jr., 10072 Hedge Dr., St. Louis 63137. 314/868-1472

MONTANA

Butte- Mark Ross, 111 W.Quartz 59701. 406/782-4465

NEW YORK

IU670 Socialist Party USA Natl Office Job Shop- 516 W. 25th St. #404, NYC 10001. 212/691-0776
Capital District Group- POB 74, Altamont NY 12009. (518)861-5627

Rochester- Del: Ric Garren, 716/232-4005
NYC GMB- Del: Wade Rawluk, 5610 Netherland Ave #4D, Bronx 10471. 718/796-3671. Rochelle Semel, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick 13348. 607/293-6489

OREGON

Eugene GMB - c/o Rick George, 1840 W. 10th Ave., 97402 email: rickg@efn.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Lehigh Valley GMB- POB 4133 Bethlehem 18018 610/515-0181. Del: Trish D'Amore 434-0128. <len.flank@node99.com> Bruce Mark Nevin, 141 E King St #8A, Lancaster 17602.
Philadelphia GMB- 4722 Baltimore Ave. 19143. 215/724-1424 ext. 1 <phillyiww@iww.org>
IU660 Wooden Shoe Books Records Job Shop- 112 S. 20th St. 19103. 215/569-2477.

SOUTH CAROLINA

IU450 Harbinger Publications Job Shop- Merll Truesdale, del., 18 Bluff Rd. Columbia 29201. 803/254-9398

TEXAS

Houston Group- PO Box 981101, 77098.

UTAH

Salt Lake Branch- Tony Roehrig, PO Box 520514, Salt Lake City 84152-0514. 801/296-7196 email: slcgmb@iww.org

VERMONT

Burlington Branch- c/o Thomas Jordan or Deborah Ormsbee, POB 1004, Williston 05495. 802/482-4601 or 863-0571 nfnena@igc.apc.org

WASHINGTON

IU460 Fairhaven Co-op Flour Mill Job Shop- 1115 Railroad Ave. Bellingham 98225.
Industrial Transportation Project- Arthur Miller, POB 5464, Tacoma 98415-0464
Puget Sound GMB- PO Box 20752, Seattle 98102 206/935-9012

WISCONSIN

IU450 Lakeside Press Job Shop- 1334 Williamson, Madison 53703 608/255-1800.
Madison GMB- c/o Lakeside Press. Del: Jerry Chernow

Industrial Worker

THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

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L.A. machine shop workers organizing

Fellow workers Rodriguez and Sanchez met with four workers from K-Jack Engineering Company, Inc. on June 8th. K-Jack manufactures newspaper vending equipment and employs approximately 30 workers, all of whom haven't been paid in six weeks. They are paid weekly and haven't received the last six pay checks or the checks they have received have bounced. There is no place for them to sit and eat lunch, the toilets are dirty and often nonoperational, there isn't any safety equipment and when the boss decides he needs them to work overtime he just locks them in. The majority of the workers are from Mexico, a few are from Central America; some are undocumented.

Five years earlier they tried to organize and the boss threatened with a gun and said he used to work for the Sheriffs Department and had a right to use a gun.

We explained the IWW and our idea of unionism to them. We also are assisting them in recouperating the monies owed them through the State Labor Department. The State does not look into the "legal" status of the workers filing claims. We are also connecting the workers with an immigration lawyer and are going to do some workshops on what to do if La Migra comes to the job site.

The fellow workers understand the struggle they face and were very receptive to us. They are forming a committee to organize their grievances and their solutions. They are going to talk to the other workers and plan a meeting in neutral location where we can get together with everyone and discuss ideas, problems and solutions. We emphasized the need to involve community groups, friends and family and that we would help them do that. We also stressed that their effort should be built slowly so that there is a solid foundation of community and union support.

The fellow workers at K-Jack are fed up and we are willing to help them with whatever solution they choose.

amor y solidaridad,
miguel

Australian Wobs march on May Day

Well, it wasn't really May Day, but the official tame march on the Sunday following May Day. But we were there. It's the first time the IWW has been seen at May Day for a bloody long time in Sydney, Australia. There was an IWW presence in Sydney in the '60s and again in the '70s, so it's been at least 20 years since a Wob banner has been raised in a Sydney street.

And I should admit that there wasn't a huge crowd of us — just two of us in fact. But

Around Our Union

we have hopes of a bigger event next year and another banner as well.

After the march we went to visit Johnnie, a retired builder and IWW member, who found us some photos of traditional union banners. So now we know how to make the banner hang properly, and Ray has already turned up some filials for the tops of the posts. We may not have the biggest union in the land, but next time we march we are going to have a bloody good banner.

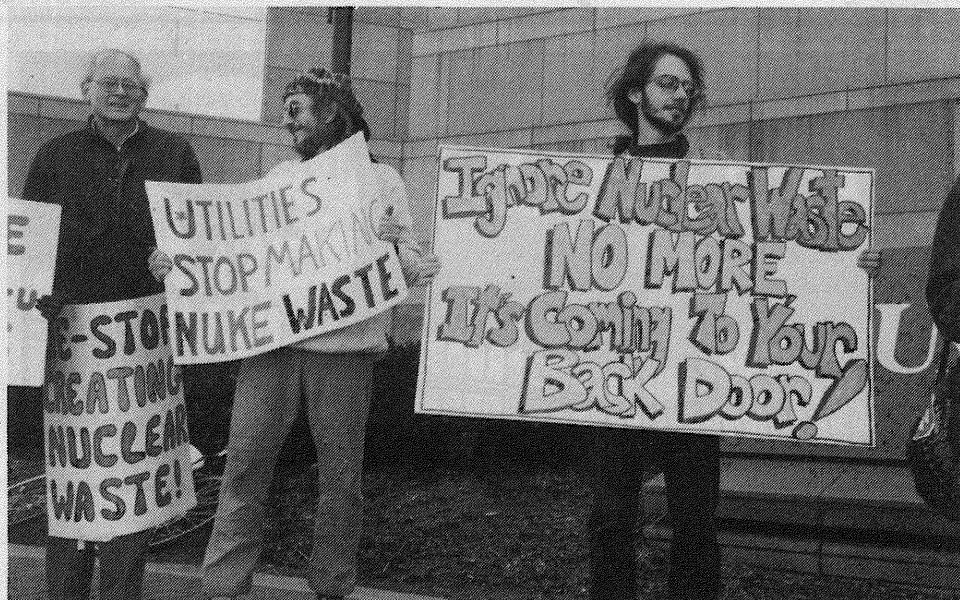
— Wal Larkin, X 342609



Organizing the Unorganized in Upstate New York

The real struggle to create a class-conscious movement of workers to battle the ravages of capitalist exploitation seems to be getting those workers into the fight.

Capital District IWW has been at the forefront of local and regional efforts to realize a raise in the federal and state minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour. Rather than apply their energy to courting "friends of labor" in the state legislature, Wobblies in New York's Capital Region have been pick-



Pickets ask for end to nuclear contamination. April 25, 1996.

photo by Don Fitz

St. Louis Wobblies Oppose Radioactive Poisoning Of Workers

Groups across the U.S. drew attention to the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster on April 26. In St. Louis local Wobblies and Greens linked the Chernobyl disaster to current plans to ship nuclear waste cross-country.

On March 12, the Gateway Green Alliance (GGA) held an informational picket in Webster Groves, Missouri, which would be on the waste shipment route. Several Wobs

eting, agitating, even producing educational materials for the last 18 months.

During this span, it became painfully evident that the workers most directly affected by low wages were not signing on to the Campaign for a Livable Minimum Wage. The coalition of labor, religious and other social justice organizations has called for an increase in New York's minimum wage to at least \$6 since 1993. With the minimum wage's buying power in real, inflation-adjusted dollars at a 40-year low, it is high time for a call for not just a boost in the minimum, but a mandated living wage. But to expect real change without mass working-class activism is only to dream.

"Verbal response to the idea of a minimum wage hike is overwhelming," Capital District IWW delegate Greg Giorgio said. The flip side of the coin is the reality that there is very little support, in terms of real commitment, outside of a small core of activists. "Our efforts to actually bring in low wage workers and tap into their energy and input have mostly fallen flat."

Giorgio believes the reasons are typical of 'post-industrial' society. "The sense of working-class apathy is also overwhelming," he explained.

"We hear and see a great deal of rhetoric from the contacts we've made on the picket line that express an extreme sense of powerlessness. They love the message but hate the idea that they need to fight for what they believe with their mind and their body. Our corporate masters have really taught them well. They do not consider the power of collective action as a viable alternative. One gets the sense that most folks are just plain scared to death to break out of their shell and take a chance to affect a change in their lives."

And, of course, positive media messages about a minimum wage hike are always countered with threats of possible job losses from the Business Council.

While Capital District IWW will continue to conduct informational picketing to enlighten people about a real living wage, the void of rebel workers to rally around the cause needs to be filled.

Plans for more public education are in the works, and Capital District IWW welcomes inquiries and suggestions from readers about their experience organizing the unorganized. Please contact them through the IWW directory.

joined that picket and the St. Louis IWW coordinated a second informational picket in Kirkwood, Missouri, on March 29. The groups worked together on an April 25 picket asking Union Electric to shut down the Callaway County nuke and and April 26 forum. The discussion was held at Preservation Hall, familiar to Wobs who have monthly meetings there. Several dozen people participated in the events which repeatedly drew lessons from Chernobyl.

On April 26, 1986, a catastrophic nuclear accident demolished Chernobyl Unit 4. Plant operators lost control of the reactor while conducting experiments at low power. In an enormous explosion of the reactor core, a mammoth amount of heat and disintegrated radioactive fuel violently erupted into the atmosphere. An atomic fire burned for days before Swedish authorities alerted the world to the return of nuclear fallout spewed high into the atmosphere.

Vladimir Chernousenko, the Ukrainian nuclear physicist who oversaw the "clean-up" of Chernobyl, documented that over 7000 people died as a result of the explosion. As many as 100,000 have died from cancers and immunological disorders during the last 10 years. Radiation has contaminated 90 million people north of the Ukraine and will continue to destroy human health for half a million years. Chernousenko described Chernobyl as "the worst catastrophe that has ever happened to humankind."

The contaminated area of the Ukraine and Belarus is about 61,780 square miles — the size of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Vast tracks of agricultural land and bodies of water have been poisoned in Ukraine, Belarus, western Russia, with significant radioactive contamination persisting as far away as Poland, Norway and Sweden.

They Know that They Lie

The American press eagerly accepts the Russian claim that Chernobyl was an "accident" — an aberration from an otherwise smoothly performing industry. Little is said about the previous history of 104 accidents in Russia or the previous explosion at Chernobyl.

It is obscene for Russia to say that only 30 people were killed at Chernobyl and it is willful distortion for the U.S. press to regurgitate that figure or to parrot the nuclear industry's claim that the major damage of Chernobyl was psychological stress.

A few months before the meltdown, Soviet Life propagandized that operating the Chernobyl plant was "safer than driving a car." Of course, the U.S. nuclear apologists have ample experience in information management. At the dawn of the nuclear age, the Atomic Energy Commission promised that nuclear plants would produce electricity which would be "too cheap to meter." Be-

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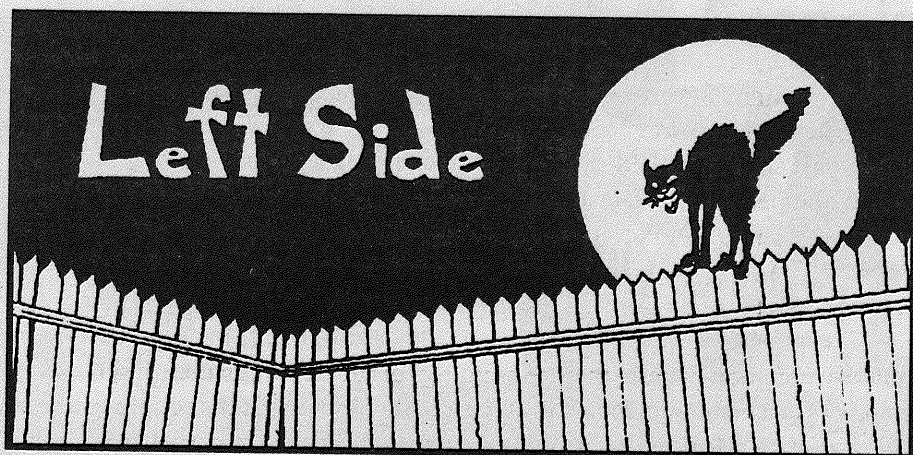
PREAMBLE TO THE IWW CONSTITUTION

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. **Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.**

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." **It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.** The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.



Members of Congress here in Freedomland have set their greedy little eyes on Redwood National Park in California. They want to give some of the park to local counties and sell the rest to private interests. Who else could those private interests be but the lumber companies? As long as we live under the present economic system, there is no such thing as public land.

Another piece of "public land," Arches National Park in Utah, is under the Bureau of Land Management. All 268 million acres of BLM land would be given away (to guess who) under legislation now before Congress. Arches National Park is where countless centuries of wind and natural erosion have created many natural bridges as well as other scenic rock formations that have left us a heritage of scenic beauty. Redwood National Park is home to the oldest and largest trees on this continent. Our duly elected public servants are fixing to turn all of this over to those who can only visualize the dollar potential of some of the most beautiful vistas to be seen upon our Mother Earth.

The Fair Economy News Service quotes Graef Crystal, who is an expert on such things as compensation, in a recent release. His research discloses that in 292 large corporations the ratio between the pay of the average chief executive officer and the average worker was 41 to 1 in 1973. In 1992 it was 145 to 1. In 1993 it was 170 to 1, in 1994 it was 187 to 1, and may have exceeded 200 to 1 in 1995.

So, fellow worker reader, why bother going to the polls this coming November when you know damn well who's calling the shots? The only real vote us working stiffs have got is the withholding of our labor power (that we seem to be having less and less of). However, it is never too late for a general strike, even though it is now more difficult to organize for one.

Sharon Daly of Catholic Charities says, in the Chicago-based *Salt of the Earth*: "Congress seems to have a sense that the country would be a lot better off if poor people just didn't have children. When you challenge them... they say, 'But we can't reward this immoral behavior.' Eventually it appears that it's only immoral to have sex or children if you're poor... Two-thirds of children born out of wedlock are not poor, they're born to working and middle and upper-income people."

Maybe Congress can grubstake Quaker Oats Company, as that corporation seems to have a remedy for too many kids being born to poor people. In December a \$60 million lawsuit was filed against Quaker Oats by the families of some handicapped children who had been the subjects of that company's experiments in the '40s and '50s. The children were told that eating the oats, which contained radioactive tracers, was part of a science club experiment, when in reality it helped Quaker in its competition with rival Cream of Wheat.

The radioactive bits, according to the lawsuit, allowed researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology to trace the absorption of the oats' calcium and iron into the body. Now is the time for the South Huntington Institute of Technology to conduct another experiment, sponsored by Congress, of course.

But never mind all this blather about the poor having too many offspring. The uppah crust prefers to have a surplus of working stiffs and a shortage of jobs rather than the reverse. That is why throughout the ages, rulers have railed against the practice of birth control.

Don't vote! It only encourages them!

— C.C. Redcloud

Letters... (continued from p. 2)

which letters are given an editorial reply etc. So you clearly have a lot of influence on the lay-out and content of the *Industrial Worker*.

If we take one recent issue of the *Industrial Worker* (March 1996) can you explain why it featured so many articles sympathetic to anarchism/anarchist groups? This issue in particular was a paper of an organization supporting anarchism – the article on Bulgarian anarchists was bizarre! Short of any other explanations I can only assume that this is due to either your own ideological preferences or that you think that you are representing the "many anarchists" in the IWW. Either way, it seems like we have a situation where control of the paper and other publications means control of the political identity of the IWW. If there is any prospect of the IWW becoming significantly larger than this has to be sorted out now.

Finally, to cut this short, there is a debate that has to take place within this organization over the kind of material that

should/shouldn't feature in our publications. At the moment there seems to be an offensive assumption that it's ok to have articles sympathetic to anarchists/anarchism, an assumption that we all dig the CNT and would have fought in the Spanish Civil War etc., while the boot goes in on everything else. Perhaps the IWW needs to have 'editorial guidelines' for those producing the paper, or maybe we should have an elected editorial committee as opposed to just one individual.

— Derek Devine, Edinburgh

Editor's Reply: While I would welcome a discussion on the newspaper, I would hope it would be somewhat more grounded in what actually is. FW Devine goes back to the March issue presumably as the strongest evidence he can find for his characterization of the IWW as an anarchist publication (though he might find stronger evidence if he went back to issues from the early 1900s). He mentions only one article, a report on the situation in Bulgaria which he finds bizarre for unexplained reasons. There were some

Job (in)Security

A recent *New York Times* Money & Business section front-pages the news that growing numbers of corporate bigwigs are turning to liposuction, hair transplants and other cosmetic surgery in an attempt to look younger and thereby hold on to their jobs. One corporate recruiter notes, "It's like all packaged goods: you don't want to put your cereal in a gray box..."

Meanwhile, the financiers fret that too many folks have jobs, and make thinly veiled threats to shut down the economy if we use this alleged economic upturn to push for better wages...

Benevolent Boss

Meanwhile, "benevolent boss" Aaron Feuerstein – praised by everyone from Bill Clinton to John Sweeney, but who forces workers to put in 12-hour shifts and demanded a wide range of concessions in his most recent contract talks – is using the insurance money on his Dickensian firetrap of a factory to build a new state-of-the-art facility. More than \$300 million of the cost is being covered by insurance, and millions of dollars of our tax dollars are flowing to Malden Mills to train workers to operate the new equipment. 550 workers are still out of work, and a growing number of workers are voicing their fear that Feuerstein will use the fire to wrest even more concessions from the union...

Friends of Labor

As the AFL-CIO pours tens of millions of dollars into its efforts to re-elect that NAFTA-loving friend of the workers, Bill Clinton, and to put more Democrats in Congress (odd how they could never muster the votes to repeal Taft-Hartley in all the years they controlled Congress), the Clinton administration is marketing prison labor to corporate execs. UNICOR, the trade name for the Justice Dept.'s Federal Prison Industries Inc. (1-800-827-3168), has expanded their gulag labor operation to mailings, with prisoners handling everything from Federal Trade Commission mail to Supreme Court decisions. Appropriately enough, prisoners send out the notices ordering young men to register for the draft. And now the Feds are making this service available to companies that do business with the government...

While Clinton is busy lining up jobs for prisoners (perhaps thinking of associates planning a change of address?), Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke (a prominent Democrat who claims to be a friend of labor and the poor), who moonlights as a director of

other, brief, references to anarchism and anarchists in that issue, alongside articles on a general strike for the right to elect a new government in Swaziland, a campaign for a higher minimum wage law in New York State, etc. FW Devine's characterization of this issue is simply not consistent with what was actually published.

There may be some IWW members and branches who forget that the IWW is not an anarchist organization (indeed, I have criticized some for this from time to time), but I am not among them.

The IWW has deliberately set out to organize all revolutionary workers, regardless of their particular ideological orientation, into One Big Union capable of taking on the bosses and building a new society. This means that the IWW included among our several hundred members many workers who oppose the current misorganization of society without holding to any particular doctrine, alongside anarchists, members of various socialist organizations, etc. Evidently, we also include some members who are implacably hostile to anarchism, and take offense to even passing reference to the fact that the workers' movement includes them. However, all workers are welcome in

the Yale Corporation, has backed the university's attack on its workers. Yale workers picketed a speech he gave recently with signs reading "Where There's Schmoke, There's Ire"...

Rail workers might consider doing the same to Clinton. When the Transportation Communication Union called for a May 9 strike after 18 months being stonewalled at the bargaining table, Clinton ordered a 60-day "cooling-off period" (after 18 months,

you'd think labor relations would be pretty much frozen) and sent the dispute to an emergency board.

These boards tra-

ditionally order deep concessions, which Congress then passes a law ordering the unions to accept. Indeed, the same day Clinton sent 34,000 TCU members to the board, government arbitrators imposed a five-year contract on 40,000 United Transportation Union workers even after they overwhelmingly voted it down. Nonetheless, TCU members said they welcomed the opportunity to make their case to the president's wage-cutting board...

Starve-Out Strikes

The IWW has long criticized the tradition of "starve-out" strikes, where workers rely on our ability to suffer for months to bring the bosses to heel. Instead, we favor short strikes, direct action on the job, tactics that minimize the pain to our fellow workers while hitting the boss where it hurts. But some workers are taking the "starve-out" strike to a new level. Not waiting for desperate poverty to take its toll, they go on hunger strike – relying on the bosses' moral conscience (or on their public relations concerns) to avert death. Twenty Chilean miners went on hunger strike May 28 to protest job cuts, four are refusing liquids. Surely there are better ways to fight than starving ourselves to death...

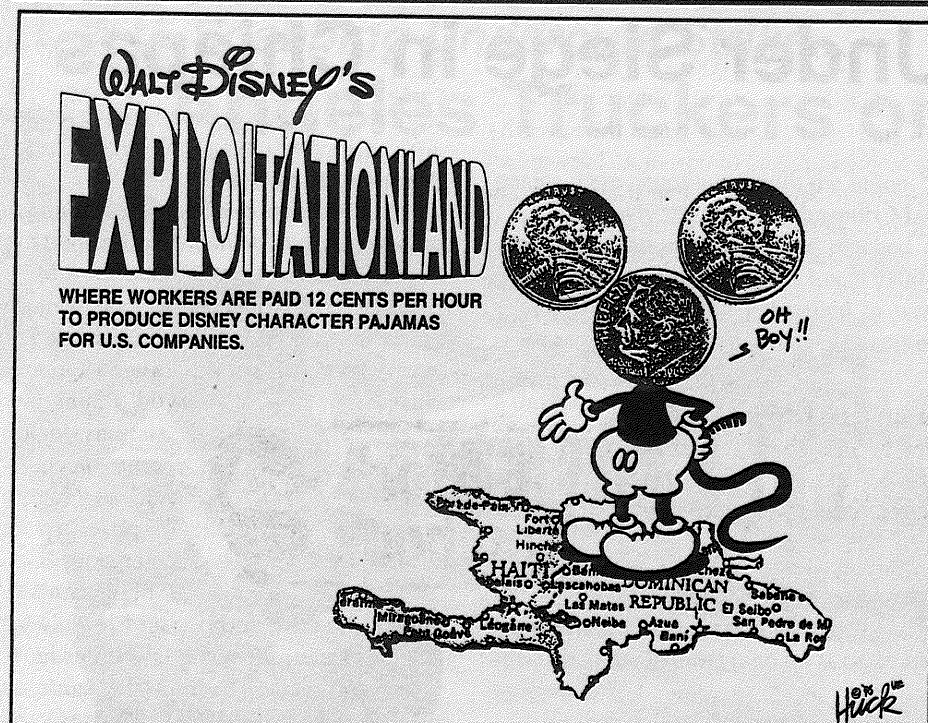
The Labor Press

The AFL-CIO has shut down its *AFL-CIO News*, explaining that it wants to refocus its "resources away from news and toward providing ... information that motivates..." There was, of course, precious little news in the *AFL-CIO News* to begin with (though the last issue to reach me did find space for four photos of AFL officers), and very few copies found their way into the hands of us working stiffs. But the last thing the labor movement needs is another glossy magazine filled with exalted rhetoric rallying us behind our exalted piecards...

our ranks who share the ideas broadly outlined in the IWW Preamble, and share our recognition that our most potent weapon lies in the fact that it is we workers who do the world's work.

As editor, I do of course decide what goes into the newspaper, subject to oversight by the General Executive Board, who (along with the membership) have the right to remove or instruct me if they take exception to my performance. However, the vast majority of comments I receive on the paper are positive. These come from members of widely divergent political perspectives, from anarchists to rank-and-file union dissidents to members of what I, at least, would characterize as a Stalinist organization. I will continue to be careful not to permit the paper to become the organ of any particular political tendency, and to keep its columns open to news of workers' diverse struggles for our emancipation, consistent with my reading of the IWW Preamble and the IWW tradition. If members disagree, I would urge them to take their concerns to the General Executive Board or the pages of the *General Organization Bulletin*, or to initiate a referendum to remove me as editor.

— Jon Bekken



Kathie Lee, Disney and the Sweatshop Uproar

Controversy about Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line has thrown harsh light on a TV star accused of profiting from labor at sweatshops. While Gifford takes the heat, the conglomerate that owns her show – the Walt Disney Co. – appears cool and above the fray. But that's not fair.

Disquieting facts about Gifford's commercial ventures have surfaced in recent weeks. Some of the clothes with her name on the label came from a Honduran factory with girls as young as 12 working in abysmal conditions. Other Kathie Lee garments hail from a Manhattan sweatshop where even the paltry wages for adult workers went unpaid.

These revelations are painful for Gifford, who co-hosts the hugely successful "Live With Regis & Kathie Lee" program. Meanwhile, in private, Disney executives worry that news media might get around to widening the story. Their nightmare echoes the famous Mouseketeer tune ("Who's the leader of the club...") with a present-day version: "Who's the firm with sweatshops that make clothes for you and me? D-I-S...N-E-Y..."

In Haiti, poor women produce Disney clothing such as Pocahontas T-shirts and Lion King outfits for kids. Charles Kernaghan – the labor-rights activist whose congressional testimony blew the whistle on the Honduras factory – says that Disney relies on exploited Haitian labor.

"The wages are so low that the indentured workers live from debt to debt in utter misery," Kernaghan told me. The setup in Haiti is hardly fly-by-night, he added. Disney has been buying clothes from the same contractor for 20 years.

In May, while Disney continued to escape media scrutiny of its own consumer products, the company did what it could to stabilize Kathie Lee Gifford's career. When she failed to shake off the scandal, Disney wheeled out a big gun: ABC News.

In a hastily arranged May 22 segment, ABC's "PrimeTime Live" tried to bolster a sagging reputation. After Diane Sawyer acknowledged that Gifford's syndicated show and ABC are both owned by Disney, "PrimeTime" proceeded with sympathetic – even fawning – treatment.

The suffering of sweatshop employees got short shrift. Instead, the focus was on the anguish of Gifford, who exuded tearful innocence: "I felt like I was being – of all people, being kicked in the teeth for – for trying to help kids." The program touted Gifford's good works for charities.

However, the next day brought a jolting PR setback. News broke that – just a few blocks from her TV studio in New York

City – a sweatshop was turning out Kathie Lee blouses for Wal-Mart. Hired to work below minimum wage for up to 60 hours a week, many of the employees hadn't been paid at all.

The entrepreneur's husband, ABC sportscaster Frank Gifford, responded by rushing to the sweatshop with envelopes of \$300 in cash for the mistreated workers. The incident dramatized a blind spot that the Giffords share with many journalists: placing emphasis on the momentary balm of charity rather than the long-term solution of justice.

Even now, Kathie Lee Gifford doesn't seem to grasp the extent of the problem. In a statement that her publicist faxed to me on May 28, Gifford claimed that "there are a handful of unethical manufacturers."

But it's not a matter of a "handful." Thousands of deplorable garment factories operate in the United States. "There are about 22,000 cutting and sewing shops, and about half of them are really sweatshops," according to Labor Secretary Robert Reich.

Under pressure from labor-rights activists, Kathie Lee Gifford has announced an inspection program for all factories producing her line of clothes. The rigor of the process remains to be seen. But at least Gifford has acknowledged a problem – which is more than can be said for the Walt Disney Co.

Call it what you will – corporate damage control or Mickey Mouse evasion – but so far, Disney has managed to stay clear of media brickbats over sweatshops. Such avoidance is easier when a company owns many large media outlets.

Disney casts a giant media shadow since its purchase of ABC last year. The firm's broadcast and cable networks combine with divisions that handle TV syndication, book publishing, high-tech multimedia and, of course, movies.

But all of Disney's media glitz means nothing to impoverished women who work for pennies an hour.

— Norman Solomon

The above is from the author's Media Beat column, carried in 20 daily newspapers around the country. If you like what you read, he asks that you contact the editorial page editor at daily newspapers in your area and urge them to carry it. For information, email mediabeat-info@igc.org

SUPPORT THE WORKERS' PRESS
Contribute to the Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

We have a little organizing drive going on near GHQ. There have been numerous drives over the 18 years there's been an IWW branch in southeast Michigan. Many more of them faded away than succeeded. We're always looking for the next one, always analyzing any new drive to see how things which worked in the past can be applied and things which didn't can be avoided.

We're helping six data analysts at one of those companies which does phone surveys to gather public opinion then used by other companies to market their products or services. If this effort should succeed, there's the larger unit of phone interviewers to approach.

The owners of the company are hard-working young entrepreneurs. If they follow a common pattern, they're building for the day when they'll sell their little company to a larger one for a handsome profit. Meanwhile the people whose work will make that sale possible are feeling exploited. They are salaried, told when they

were hired that some weeks they'd be expected to work more than 40 hours, but some weeks they'd be able to work less; so everything would balance out. But the company's growing. The number of weeks under 40 hours are becoming few and far between. Weeks of heavy

overtime are becoming the norm. Wages which looked respectable when divided by 40 aren't looking so good when divided by 50. Workaholic bosses who will benefit from their dedication can't understand why the analysts who see no benefit beyond their paychecks aren't willing to make the same sacrifices.

One of the workers is a labor activist. We crossed paths in Jobs With Justice. I guess he likes what he's seen of the IWW. He came asking for help. He wouldn't have found us if we weren't visible. That has required proudly presenting ourselves as Wobblies when attending the innumerable meetings and supporting the activities of other labor organizations. Of course gaining visibility is only the first step. The positions we take have to make sense and be presented in a cooperative manner. We have to show our willingness to back up those positions with militance on the picket line and the shop floor. And if we were to give the impression that building the IWW was our sole objective, we'd get nowhere. We're growing once again because we are seen as promoting the interests of the working class.

We've now had three meetings with the workers over the past month. We've shared our experience and information about how they can go about organizing and what they can expect from management. They've picked and chosen from the information we've provided. We can't do it for them. And we can't spoon feed them. We can tell them what we know, provide the help they request if it's within our resources, and point them to other resources when ours are limited. The conviction and commitment to carry out the drive has to reside within the workers themselves. We're there to support them along the way. If we've done our job well, they'll become Wobblies when they decide they need a Union.

The data analysts started with faith in the good will of their employers. They wanted to present a list of grievances without trying to gain union recognition or trying to negotiate a contract. They asked if the IWW would support them even if they chose not to join. And we said yes. While we want to see the union grow, that isn't an end unto itself. The goal is to build working class consciousness. From that consciousness, solidarity should follow. They're checking out a few other unions to make sure they've considered all their options. The UAW didn't call them back. Their request for information and help was probably prioritized based on the small size of their unit. The Communication Workers local has expressed an interest. I have to wonder if that interest will still be there if the workers ask the same question we were asked about help without affiliation. All of this will be part of the learning process workers undertake in an organizing drive.

They've now presented their grievances to management. Management went running to their lawyer, another step in the learning process. The workers were not pleased with this response to a request for friendly negotiations. A meeting with management and the lawyer is scheduled soon. We've provided the workers with materials to help them understand labor law. We believe we've helped them to be as well prepared as any corporate lawyer without special training in that specialized field.

That's where things stand at the moment. With a little luck this won't again be the topic for one of my future columns. Rather it will be an article elsewhere in the paper about a successful IWW organizing drive. Then visibility, reasonable positions presented in a cooperative manner, and militance to advance the cause of the working class will have paid off. And if it doesn't this time, then we'll be out there searching for the next drive.

See you on the picket line.

— Fred Chase

General Secretary-Treasurer

Utah Phillips Solidarity Fund

Arthur Ellison, Concord NH	50
Jill Warzer, Columbia SC	25
Rob McCall, Blue Hill ME	20
Tim Smith, Athens OH	20
Adriane Paavo, Regina Canada	25
Jim Wolf, Boone NC	50
Eugene Bryant, Palermo ME	20

I.W. Sustaining Fund

Richard Roth, Seattle WA	5
Walter Hooke, Cambridge NY	55
C. Stoll, West Midlands U.K.	6
Chris White, Fairbanks AK	10
Jamie Hutchinson, Urbana IL	10

Corrections

The Liverpool dock is not England's "last remaining port" as stated in the San Francisco Marine Transport Workers resolution reprinted in our last issue, but the country's last unionized port.

The line quoted in FW Chase's last column ("If the workers take a notion we can stop all speeding trains") comes not from "Solidarity Forever," as he said, but from Joe Hill's classic "Workers of the World Awaken." Your editor knew this, of course, but the column came in after deadline, and so received less attention than it should have.

The People and the Land Under Siege in Chiapas

"We use black and red in our uniform as a symbol of our working people on strike." ...from the Declaration of War, December 31, 1993, General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) from the Lacandon Jungle

La Realidad, Selva Lacandon, Chiapas, Mexico — Our vehicle was in the middle of a dusty caravan on the road to the rebel stronghold of La Realidad (The Reality) when the moon rose above the selva (jungle) and then disappeared in total eclipse.

From my vantage point in our vehicle I couldn't see the Comet Hyakutake, but knew it was somewhere out above and I also knew that below, jaguars, howler monkeys and scorpions dwelled — and Zapatistas. And Mexican military troops whose leaders (at least some of them) were trained at the notorious School of The Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia.

Before dark we were all stopped at Migración and forced to show passports and visas to Mexican officials who proudly wore pins claiming that they were graduates of the U.S. Border Patrol School. This was not as tedious as last week when we drove through eight military checkpoints on our journey to the Monte Azules Biosphere Reserve in the selva.

We were invited to the first Encuentro (Encounter) of the Americas in La Realidad by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos who called this "a gathering of lunatics." Surely we were a bit touched as is anyone in this day and age who believes there is a better way to exist on the earth than in the vice grip of the current ideology of present day capitalism: Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism's principle objective is to maximize profits for private corporations and businesses, without concern for social needs or the environment. The United States is one of the key maintainers of that vice grip.

The Zapatista uprising has given hope to all who believe in a better way to live. They have become a symbol of resistance and have opened a forum for dialogue within the civil society of Mexico...

Background

Two of Neoliberalism's crowning achievements of this decade are the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which effectively globalize capitalism and remove trade barriers such as workers' rights or environmental regulations. These trade agreements effectively take local control away from the people and give it over completely to multinational corporations.

On January 1st, 1994 (the day NAFTA went into effect), many of the indigenous in Chiapas, under the banner of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN), rebelled. Although peace talks with the government quickly followed there has been no real peace. The struggle has been going on for a long time in that region and it did not just begin January 1st, two and a half years ago, nor did it end shortly thereafter. The struggle began when the European invasion occurred over 500 years ago and it continues to this day. The stakes are high, as they always are when people try to control their own destinies. In this world of dwindling natural resources the question of 'who controls the land and what is it used for' becomes increasingly critical.

The Zapatista uprising has given hope to all who believe in a better way to live. They have become a symbol of resistance

and have opened a forum for dialogue within the civil society of Mexico. Mexico, directly below the U.S. geographically, is a nation at unrest. Unrest from the maquiladore sweat shops in the north, to strikes from education workers in the universities, oil workers in Tabasco, bus drivers in Mexico City and to Chiapas where all eyes are pointed.

The Mexican Military (courtesy of Uncle Sam)

When our plane landed in Chiapas, I saw the Mexican military in fortified bunkers along the airstrip. The military is everywhere in Chiapas. Nearly one-third of Mexico's military troops are in Chiapas. They are there not to defend against foreign invaders but to keep the people subjugated and protect global financial interests. The U.S. is directly involved in fortifying this military and aiding the corrupt Mexican government. Last year President Clinton sent down a \$20 billion bail-out loan to the Mexican government. What people are not being told about is the tremendous amount of armament and other military assistance either given or sold to Mexico. The Mexican daily *La Jornada* reported May 17th that from 1989 to the present, Mexico bought 7148 personal transport armored vehicles. In addition, the U.S. Pentagon has agreed to give seventy-three UH-1H Huey helicopters to the Mexican Airforce to be used "principally" (but not exclusively) for anti-drug activities.

From 1983-95 approximately 725 Mexican military officers have been trained in the U.S., in such places like the infamous School of the Americas. Much of this has come under the label of the "Drug War," ironic because there is much evidence to indicate that the Mexican military is linked to the narcotics trade.

When asked about U.S. military advisors operating in Chiapas, Peter Lumsdaine of Global Exchange said, "I'm pretty convinced myself that there are actually some teams of special forces soldiers operating in Mexico but I can't prove that."

The Rebels

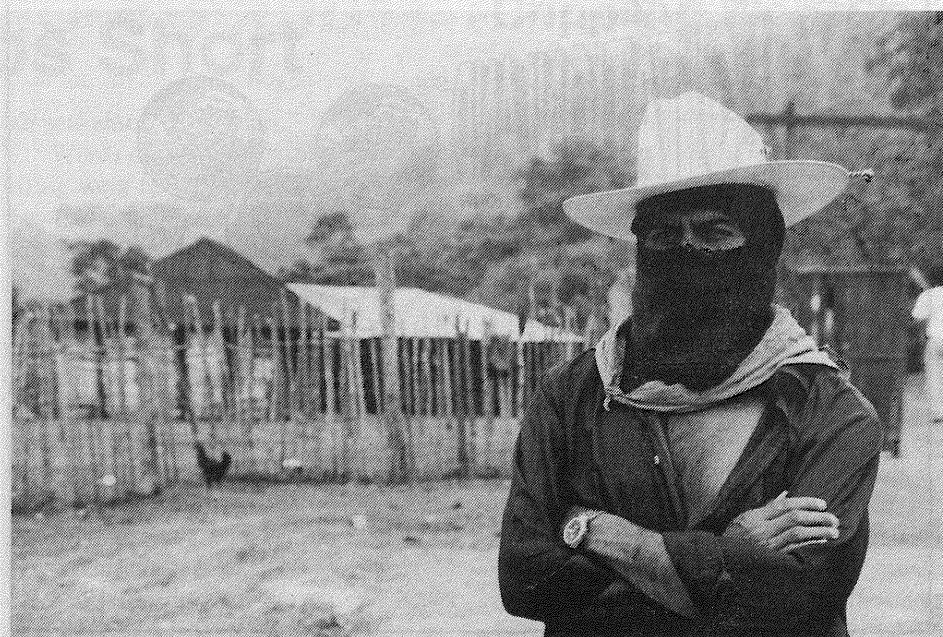
One of the first towns in rebel territory we visited was Francisco Gomez (formally la Garucha). No ski masks, just faces. The men were in a tin roofed, opened walled building, one of four Centers of Resistance or New Aguascalientes in the Zapatista autonomous areas. They were learning dental hygiene. The women were in another building discussing reproductive health. Education for the people.

Tensions were high because the week before, three campesinos and two police were killed nearby during a governmental eviction of land squatters in the village of Nicolas Ruiz.

Tensions are always high. Last year in February the whole town of La Garucha fled into the mountainous jungle when the military invaded the area. Some of the same men who are brushing their teeth now in the Aguascalientes and the women who are educating themselves about their bodies were drinking their own urine to survive last year as they hid out. But not all of them are here now. Some died in the jungle during that invasion.

We and the children, women, men, dogs, chickens and pigs of the village went to sleep that night with twelve tanks pointed at the village from the Mexican military encampment two kilometers away. Low intensity warfare. Psychological abuse. Three people in our expedition slept in the schoolhouse that had a mural of Mexican Revolution leader Emiliano Zapata with a dove on his shoulder.

The next morning we took a tour. To



A Zapatista in the rebel stronghold of La Realidad (The Reality). Surrounding the village is the Selva Lacandon, one of North America's last remaining tropical rainforests. It is reported that the World Bank will promote plantations of rubber, oil palm and bamboo in the rainforest, further denuding it of its biological diversity.

photo: Langelles/NFN

get to the cornfield one has to go past the military camp. There is a helicopter landing pad outside the camp's perimeter. We were told by our guide from CONPAZ not to stray: land mines. The village women are afraid to bathe or do laundry in the stream. The eyes of the Mexican military are on everyone, especially the women. Sometimes it is more than just leering in Chiapas, though. Rape is another form of the low intensity (psychological) warfare being waged against the women and girls.

Back in La Realidad there are ski masks. Rebel stronghold. As he descends his horse there is a determination in Commandante Tacho's eyes. They seem to frown and smile at the same time. Subcomandante Marcos talks of his beetle friend from the jungle, Durito. Marcos knows there is serious business to be discussed. He tells everyone (no doubt prompted by the beetle) to put seriousness off until tomorrow. Tonight music and dance. It makes me think of Emma Goldman.

The next day I observe a young boy sitting in front of a Zapatista underground bunker. I look into his eyes. His eyes tell me he is too old to play and too young to ride off into the jungle with the commandantes. This is reality. A very loud boom explodes in the sky. Fireworks. The Zapatistas are celebrating Easter.

The Land

Chiapas is diverse. Cool dry highlands. Flat Depressions. Mountains of the Sierra Madre De Chiapas. And the Selva Lacandon, one of North America's last remaining tropical rainforests.

The Selva Lacandon is part of a larger rainforest ecosystem that extends through Guatemala and into Belize. This entire ecosystem is second in the Americas only to the Amazon Basin. The Selva Lacandon comprises only 4% of Mexico's land mass, yet holds over one-third of its bird species, 25% of its mammals and 77% of its amphibians and reptiles. It is an important habitat for a number of endangered species including the tapir, jaguar, ocelot, spider and howler monkeys and white tortoise. It is also home to incredible natural resources as well as the insurgent armed EZLN which poses a threat to the extraction of those resources.

For the past couple of years it has been speculated that oil under the Selva Lacandon may be one of the key reasons for the government's attempt to suppress the rebellion. Another resource found in the Selva, natural gas, may be considered even more precious, though, since Mexico is committed to natural gas conversion by 1998.

In addition, research anthropologist

Ronald Nigh, who has lived in Chiapas for the last 28 years, reports that the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank recently announced that it will promote plantations of rubber, oil palm and bamboo in the Chiapas rainforest. "Indians would go into debt to become, essentially, workers in an agro-industry in which their sole function would be to provide a cheap raw material to the corporations who would receive all the value added," Nigh says. "Schemes like these," continues Nigh, "conjure up visions of a future Lacandon Rainforest converted into a dismal concentration camp, tended by the army, where jungle has been replaced by monoculture plantations and free men and women have become prisoners of yet another system to remove their resources and wealth and leave them at the lowest rungs of society."

by Orin Langelles, with research help from Melissa Burch.

Orin Langelles is a Wobbly and is the campaign coordinator for the Native Forest Network's Eastern North American Resource Center. Special thanks to the Earth First! Direct Action Fund for the use of their video camera. A full written report concerning the NFN's documentary trip to Chiapas and a video will be produced shortly. For further information or to make a donation, contact the NFN, POB 57, Burlington, VT 05402 telephone: 802/863-0571 email: nfnena@igc.apc.org

Mexican Teachers Beaten By Police

Teachers demanding better pay and improved benefits marched through the streets of Mexico City June 5 snarling traffic and scuffling with authorities. Members of a dissident teachers' union invaded the Mexican Congress building to press their demands.

The march followed a May 23 clash which caused nervousness on financial markets as concerns spread about the stability of the government.

Thirty-one protestors were injured, 11 seriously, when riot police attacked three thousand dissident teachers May 23, according to the National Education Workers Coordinating Committee (CNTE), a rank-and-file group which is considering forming an independent union. Following a march of 15,000 teachers, teachers attempted to approach the heavily guarded presidential mansion, Los Piños, to present their demand for a 100 percent pay increase to President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon.

Mexico's one million teachers belong

I.L.W.U. Scabbing Undercuts Strike... Los Angeles Truckers on Strike

A six-week-old strike by truckers working the Southern California ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach continues as we go to press with no end in sight. These ports are the two largest in the nation, and combined they are the world's third-busiest harbor. Usually 20,000 truckloads a day travel between the ports and major rail yards near downtown Los Angeles, where they are loaded onto trains for shipment east. Some cargo carriers report that operations have slowed to 20 percent of their normal pace.

The strike by some 6,000 truckers culminated an 18-month organizing drive by the Communications Workers of America. Weekly union meetings have been drawing thousands of workers.

On the picket line at the Maersk terminal in Long Beach trucker José Barbaro said he struck because "We can't make a living doing this anymore. We own our own rigs and pay for insurance, gas, tires, maintenance, registration fees and taxes.

"They pay us \$50 to go from the harbor to the Santa Fe Railroad yard and \$25 for the return trip. That can take three hours or it can take all day. We can spend hours sitting in line at Santa Fe. It's real easy to lose money doing this. The companies we contract with have corrupt dispatchers who give jobs that make money to those operators that pay them off. This is why we need a union." Workers who complained about short wages (which sometimes fell below minimum wage) were paid, but then were "not dispatched" (effectively fired) on future jobs.

Another demand by many owner-operators was for an end to abusive treatment. "This is a strike for our dignity and for the right to earn a living," Carlos Reyes, another operator, stated.

CWA Local 9400 representative Laura Reynolds says the dispute began April 22nd when employee-status workers at five transport companies demanded union recognition. (Although the vast majority of the workers are at the port are owner-operators paid by the load, several hundred drive company trucks as employees and so are clearly covered by U.S. labor laws.) Workers at another company demanded recognition a few days later. When management began retaliating against union supporters, workers launched an Unfair Labor Practices strike and the owner-operator drivers (who are not covered by labor law) struck in solidarity.

A representation election has been held at one of the transport companies, but the ballots have been sealed while Unfair Labor Practice charges are heard. Another election was underway at press time, while two com-

panies were negotiating with the union.

The newly organized Transport Maritime Association (TMA) has reached an interim agreement with CWA Local 9400 in which workers would get called to work from a union hiring hall and have the option of selling their rigs to the firm and receiving a flat rate of \$25 an hour for their work. The company was organized shortly before the strike, and hopes to become the dominant operator in the ports by rationalizing the short-haul operations. Before the strike these "independent" operators worked under a sort of motorized shape-up in which they waited for hours at the port waiting for cargo to be ready for hauling (and for access roads to open up).

An estimated 4,200 truckers who own and operate their own rigs, roughly two-thirds of the truckers in the harbor, have signed up to work exclusively for TMA or other firms having contracts with the union. But shipping companies are refusing to do business with unionized carriers.

The heavily Mexican workforce marked May Day with picketing at every terminal at both ports. Since then, picketing has continued at work sites and trucking terminals.

Although the amount of cargo being handled is down sharply, trucking companies are maintaining operations with scabs recruited at wages far higher than those paid to workers before the strike began. The companies say they can't afford to meet union demands for \$25 an hour, but are paying scabs as much as \$40 an hour. Two container lines, including a Hyundai contractor, have diverted ships to Oakland and Seattle ports where they are being unloaded by union crews.

While the strikers are reportedly solid, their efforts are being undermined by persistent union scabbing at both ends of their operation. International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union crews are working behind union picketlines unloading cargo from ships and loading them onto the scab-driven trucks, while rail workers are taking cargo from the scabs. (An ILWU Local 13 official refused our request to explain why the local was dispatching workers to cross CWA picketlines, or why its members were doing so, declining to comment on "unconfirmed allegations.") The CWA's Reynolds said the union is not picketing rail yards.

Reynolds said the CWA is satisfied with the "solidarity" it has received from these unions, saying the ILWU has supported the strikers with donations and has closed some terminals where scabs have created unsafe working conditions.

The union is pressing the Los Angeles City Council for a resolution supporting the

Chilpancingo, on May 15. On May 18 they moved the demonstration to Mexico City, leaving in 15 trucks the state government provided after the CETEG announced that its members would seize buses for the trip.

In Mexico City the Guerrero teachers, along with teachers from Oaxaca and Michoacan, joined a sit-in the CNTE had been holding outside the Public Education Secretariat (SEP) since May 8. The protesters then began a series of demonstrations in the downtown area over the next few days. Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, Mexico City's regent (a mayor appointed by the national president), blamed the May 23 violence on "provocateurs." Some PRD legislators demanded Espinosa's resignation, charging that he was the real provocateur. Thousands of teachers demonstrated in several states on May 24 to protest the Los Piños incident; the CNTE pulled out tens of thousands of teachers in a three-day protest strike starting May 27.



workers' right to union representation and calling for an investigation of police harassment of picketers.

Union Scabbing Explained

The IWW's Puget Sound General Membership Branch has reissued Oscar Ameringer's classic pamphlet "Union Scabs," first published in the March 14, 1908, *Industrial Union Bulletin*. A postscript discusses union scabbing during the recent Boeing strike (where four in-plant unions crossed the Machinists' picket lines), and calls for all workers to join One Big Union in order to more effectively fight the bosses for better conditions and to eliminate the divisions that promote union scabbing.

As Ameringer notes, "There are three kinds of scabs: The professional scab, the amateur, and the union scab... By far the most important class is the union scab..."

"The union scab receives less pay than the professional scab, works better than the amateur scab, and doesn't know that he is a scab." Union scabs, Ameringer noted, are always eager to flash their union cards in your face, and to pass ringing resolutions of moral support. "The whole thing is like beating a man's brains out and then handing him a headache tablet..."

Copies of *Union Scabs* are 25 cents (and a SASE). Write: IWW, PO Box 20752, Seattle WA 98102.

Detroit Newspaper Workers Fight On

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney pledged the federation's full support to Detroit newspaper strikers recently, adding: "This has been a tough fight but you're going to win. I feel confident you're going to win." Meanwhile, union workers continue producing newspapers for the Gannett and Knight Ridder chains, giving the media conglomerates the profits they need to finance more than a hundred million dollars of losses in Detroit.

Rather than call for union workers to stop financing the publishers' war against Detroit newspaper workers, Sweeney promised to "study" a proposal for a national rally of labor activists in the Detroit area to support the strikers.

Strike supproters have organized weekly demonstrations at the newspaper offices in which scores of unionists and supporters have been arrested. In May workers began blocking downtown intersections to call attention to the dispute, and have marched in front of the homes of newspaper executives and scabs. Supporters are also handbilling advertisers and stores where the scab papers are being sold, asking people to shop elsewhere.

Despite taking over a hundred million dollars in strike losses in the last year, the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* haven't budged from their prime union-busting proposal: that scabs hired during the strike won't be fired, even if unions settle. A prominent newspaper analyst predicted recently that continuing circulation losses will kill the *Detroit News*.

Kicking Out the Bosses

The New Bedford, Mass., city council on May 23 approved for the second time a resolution to use the city's power of eminent domain to seize the J.C. Rhodes factory. The mayor has pledged to veto the resolution, but unless some councillors change their votes his veto will not be sustained.

Some 120 workers in the impoverished city work at the Rhodes plant, which owner Kohlberg & Co. has decided to close. United Electrical Workers Local 284, which represents manufacturing workers at the plant, has spearheaded efforts to keep the plant open, but is supported by other area unions and even by 200 local business owners.

Kohlberg bought the J.C. Rhodes plant five months ago, in order to shut it down and move its machinery and production to non-union plants it owns in Georgia. Although the New Bedford plant has long been profitable, Kohlberg figures it could be even more profitable without union workers. However, they need its one-of-a-kind dyes and presses in order to hold onto the markets for which Rhodes is the sole supplier.

Kohlberg has sued the city to block the ordinance. As required by Massachusetts law, the city is appraising the plant and seeking bids from businesses and the union to raise money to compensate Kohlberg for the plant's fair market value. Reports are that appraisals of the plant's "fair market value" are coming in considerably lower than what Kohlberg paid for it.

The union has set up a trailer at the plant gate, and is guarding the property 24 hours a day, seven days a week to make sure Kohlberg doesn't sneak the equipment out.

French Strikes...

continued from page 1

a national demonstration called by UNSA, the 400,000-strong public-sector union which has accused the government of "organising the destruction of the public services." Unions opposing the privatisation of France Telecom called a 24-hour strike for June 4, gas and electricity unions, fearing deregulation of the energy industry, called a one-day strike on June 5, and railway workers marched on parliament June 6.

French unemployment is at a near-record high of 11.9 percent, and unions insist that a shorter work week (some say 32 hours, others 35) is the only way to address the problem. French employers, however, are urging the government to layoff more workers to cut taxes and public spending.

In an effort to defuse the growing unrest, Prime Minister Alain Juppe, whose deficit-slashing plans touched off a month-long transport strike at the end of last year, denied a report that 25,000 government jobs would be cut in his next austerity budget.

While some 12,000 demonstrators marched in downtown Paris May 23, railroad workers kept three out of four commuter trains from running, delaying trains through the Channel Tunnel to London, and forcing one high-speed train from Belgium to divert from its normal Paris terminus to the station at Charles de Gaulle Airport.

"If there is one theme that has been at the center of our demands for a long time, it's a reduction in working hours," said union leader Nicole Notat. "I have never heard so many people complaining about long working hours and overtime not being paid or compensated for."

Demonstrations have continued across the country as the government prepares its budget, and a revival of the strike waves that brought the country to a halt last December could well be seen before the end of the summer.

to the pro-government National Education Workers Union (SNTE), Mexico's largest union. The government traditionally announces raises for SNTE members on May 15, Teachers Day. After this year's massive May 1 demonstrations by independent unions, the CNTE and local SNTE branches carried out scores of protests to push for a 100% wage increase, improved benefits and better pensions. On May 14 the government offered a package consisting of a 12% pay raise and a 10% increase in benefits; the SNTE immediately accepted the offer, even though it leaves teachers' purchasing power at about half what it was in 1976 when a teacher could buy 3.3 kilos of bread with a day's wage. Today he or she can buy only 1.2 kilos.

Many teachers rejected the pact. Some 600 teachers in the Guerrero State Education Workers Coordinating Committee (CETEG) started a sit-in in front of the government building in the state capital,

4200 Hear Speeches...

Yale Solidarity March Stops Short

The Yale demonstration: we came, we saw, but we did *not* conquer — but then again, that was evidently *not* the point.

Over 4,000 people from unions and campuses up and down the east coast united on May 27 outside of a particularly castle-like Yale University building in New Haven, Connecticut. We gathered in support of Yale workers whose three unions alternately struck for decent contracts this last spring (see article last issue). May 27 marked the 1996 commencement ceremony for graduating students.

At the outset the rally appeared promising, and not in any contrived sense. When people come together from various union struggles we quickly uncover certain patterns of our common problem — bosses not only hate our unions, they want to directly get rid of more and more of us individual workers too!

As the Yale workers have long said, contract “negotiations” are obviously not about constructing a secure working relationship between workers and bosses. Rather, we workers are being told to take months off without pay and be “replaced” by “permanent temporary” workers who are conveniently kept outside of our unions. We are struggling for our very survival.

Meanwhile, our bosses are soaking us for even more money than before, as Yale is with its \$4 million per-day profit on the interest from its savings alone.

With these shared problems on our minds, we were particularly jarred by the spectacle of a trumpet-announced procession of Yale’s academic bosses dressed in menacing robes. Relief came only from clusters of graduating students who wore “Yale Settle Now!” stickers.

Like any group of people who are still strong enough to resist, we spoke our minds. We cheered our allies, and we jeered our bosses. In fact, our voices rang so true that we grew loud enough to draw the attention of all the bosses, professors, students and their families and friends at the castle’s entrance. And our power was creative — some people added drums, others devised newer chants, and still more exchanged waves and clenched fists between students and workers.

Then a series of Yale worker/“marshalls” pleaded with us to stop raising our voices. “This is not what we’re here for,” one yellow-shirt told me, his two hands weakly drawn together in prayer. We were evidently *not* there to conquer Yale.

Republicans Picket AFL

Seven Republican Congressmen marched on AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington May 23 to protest radio ads that they claimed were unfair. They were delayed for 40 minutes by hundreds of union-minded counter-protesters.

AFL officials say they expect next year’s Congress to be composed of a majority of Republicans and Democrats responsive to workers’ needs. (That would be a first!) The AFL-CIO has allocated \$35 million to its political campaign efforts, and expects affiliated unions to more than double that.

Pratt May Get New Trial

The California Supreme Court has ordered a hearing on former Black Panther Party leader Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt’s request for a new trial. Pratt supporters are hopeful that after 24 years in prison on a charge of killing a teacher during a 1968 robbery (in fact Pratt was hundreds of miles away, attending a party meeting at the time), he will finally get a chance to present the evidence of his innocence.

My fellow workers in Boston have long known of my utopian — perhaps even naive — excitement at large labor protests. But it took my personal witness of mass inaction at Yale for me to see how deeply troubled we, the working class, are by our own defeatist tactics.

After some of our hosts silenced our spontaneous support, we followed their and Jesse Jackson’s lead in marching around and eventually surrounding the Yale castle. This time the spectacle we faced was not a collection of robed bosses, but rather a concoction of suited officials.

During the march we exchanged cheers with various on-duty workers enjoying a cigarette in the sun (or sneaking out to show their support), but Jesse Jackson mocked this genuine gesture of solidarity by tackling workers in front of numerous TV cameras. Jackson’s buffoonery was the center of CNN’s report on the demonstration (although they reported it as legitimate).

Once we circled the building, we were directed to a stage opposite the Yale castle. We would neither disrupt the streets of New Haven nor the towers of Yale. We would not even face the oppressor again — instead, we would face our spectacular leaders on the podium pontificating, even preaching, to us about how we must struggle for power over

our self-absorbed “leaders.”

Words of *how* Yale workers are organizing were few and far between. Instead they told us how greedy our bosses are and how victimized we are. Of course there is power in the union, but the piecards merely assume this, they do not understand our power as a practice that we as workers constantly re-produce. For if we were re-producing our power on May 27 we would have kept connecting with our student allies and confronting our bosses, and we would have spent our time during and afterwards strategizing with each other about methods of resistance instead of passively observing our leaders strike static poses and speak tired phrases.

This demonstration was about media. And that was our only real message — at least on that one day. However, there have been many days in the preceding months when Yale workers have been on the picket line and some 30-plus student supporters have gotten arrested occupying buildings. Our strength comes from uniting around these *actions*, and if some of us want spectacles then we can invite our “leaders” and CNN to these events. If we unite in action more often than perhaps our bosses would know who really runs our workplaces.

— Chris Vance

Nader Calls for Shaking Up AFL-CIO

Following is a commentary by long-time consumer activist Ralph Nader on changes in the AFL-CIO. Publication in no way endorses Nader’s non-campaign for U.S. president:

Will the new labor leadership at the AFL-CIO of John Sweeney and Richard Trumka shake up this giant passive organization of trade unions into a new dynamic? They certainly talk that way in the weeks since they moved into the AFL-CIO headquarters near the White House.

There is no way to go but up. Organized labor has seen its membership decline and its percentage of the workforce that is unionized fall from the low thirties in the 1950s to half that today. Its anemic past leadership has been long on shadowboxing with business opponents and funnelling campaign money to politicians who care little about labor and curtsy to corporations.

Defeat after defeat in Congress and vis-a-vis industry have turned into humiliations. When computer programmers are laid off but not before they train their lower-paid replacements from overseas who come into the U.S. labor market under a special federal statute, that’s humiliation.

When workers at the Caterpillar plant in Illinois are beaten by replacement workers and have to go back to work without a contract under company rules that restrict their free speech and the kind of slogans they can wear on their T-shirts, that is humiliation.

Some 30,000 building maintenance workers recently settled a strike in New York City, after building owners, who charge the highest rents in the nation, demanded that new hires start at about 50% lower wages than present workers. Few had bet on the janitors to win this battle.

What is amazing about organized labor’s weakness is the strength of their existing but little-used assets. Let’s take an inventory!

First, they have a large audience of workers whom they have abandoned to the likes of Rush Limbaugh because the AFL-CIO has no national media programs on radio and television. In the 1940s unions

owned about 20 radio stations, which they short-sightedly sold in the 1950s. Since then, despite the expansion of cable channels in the dozens, there is no labor TV channel, no regular program or even an occasional one hour show.

Whether it is radio, broadcast television or cable television, organized labor is not there. A few local labor radio programs have begun to appear, but is there any constituency remotely as large as labor that its leaders electronically ignore so comprehensively? It is not a matter of money; trade unions have well-stocked treasuries these days because there are so few strikes to deplete strike funds.

The new AFL-CIO leadership plans to change this indifference to media communications, realizing that union newspapers sent to their members are not sufficient.

Second, the unused power of their hundreds of billions of dollars in union-controlled pension funds. These funds have major stock holdings in large corporations. They have large deposits in large banks. Labor unions have rarely used this financial muscle with any sustained imagination and strategic sense. There is some indication that the new leadership may revise this reluctance.

Third, Sweeney and Trumka are very clear about one vigorous direction — pouring much more money into organizing workers, including lower income laborers, and training a young generation of organizers. They want trade unions to spend a third of their

Assembly Lines Crippling Workers

The rapid pace of production on major auto assembly lines is provoking stress, physical risks and pain, a major Canadian Auto Workers survey says, and officials believe alcohol abuse is also on the rise.

A joint survey by the CAW and McMaster University paints a grim picture of life on the line at nine Canadian auto plants operated by the Big Three auto makers and Cami Automotive Inc. General Motors of Canada Ltd., ranked worst among those surveyed.

“We have a real problem,” CAW president Buzz Hargrove said. “Workloads are increasing and stress is greater than ever.”

The survey compares working conditions and examines the relationship between changes in the organization of work and the focus on “lean production.” It asked 2,424 workers to rate their workload, physical and stress risks and relations with management, among others.

The survey found that 72 percent of auto workers said they feel insecure about their future, and 55 percent said they are working in pain for much of the time. Another 78 percent said they don’t believe they can keep up the pace until age 60.

Brian Grills, an assembly plant worker at GM’s Buick plant in Oshawa, says the increasing demands for speed on the line are impossible to keep up with — and they are

continued on page 10

budgets on organizing; some unions now spend around one-20th of their budgets on this key mission.

Without organizers and a backup infrastructure — such as astute communication over the media — workers don’t have a chance against large employers and their union-dissolving consulting firms.

Fourth, with their many thousands of rejuvenated locals, organized labor can start to elect candidates who stay true to their promises and understand the needs of workers and their families in a nation whose corporations are often busy downsizing the middle class.

Department of Labor data show that about 80% of American workers are earning less, adjusted for inflation, than they did 20 years ago. Global corporations are getting away with more and more; and workers are working longer hours and not keeping up.

The AFL-CIO has announced an election year budget of \$35 million for the Congressional races. How that money is spent or wasted remains a key question. Will it disappear in ineffective 30 second television ads, or will it leave something of value behind after election day that can carry on the struggle?

Finally, organized labor always needs a burr under its saddle from the workers themselves to advance union democracy for lean responsive unions and a ‘shop floor’ agenda for a full employment economy.

— Ralph Nader

Excerpted from The Progressive Populist

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Direct Actions Back Liverpool Dockers

A mass meeting of more than 400 Mersey dockers voted June 7 to reject a new offer by Mersey Docks & Harbour Company. There was only one vote against rejection. Under the deal all 329 previous employees of MD&HC would be re-employed (not reinstated) for four weeks. They would not work but would be paid £1000.

Those accepting severance would have received £25,000. Sixty workers would have received jobs with MD&HC, and the company would also offer voluntary severance to scabs in some areas, opening another 40 jobs or so. The company reserved the right to decide the "suitability" of anyone applying for re-employment. The scheme only covered the MD&HC workers. There was no offer for the 130 men formerly employed by other companies.

MD&HC stressed, as it has with all previous offers, that this was their "final offer." The company faxed a copy of the offer to the president of the U.S. International Longshoremen's Association. The company is still anxious concerning international action taken by dockers against its biggest customer, Atlantic Container Line (ACL – one of the largest shipping lines using the Liverpool port, and which has violated its pledge to stop using it until the dispute is settled).

Dockworkers around the world continue to expand their solidarity with the 500 Liverpool dockers locked out of their jobs by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Co. Ships worked by scabs at the Liverpool port have been blockaded and refused service at ports throughout Europe and in Australia and the U.S. The locked-out dockers have adopted the slogan "The World is Our Picket Line," and have put it into practice with roving pickets. (Financial support to continue this struggle is necessary and can be sent to Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Committee, J. Davies, Secretary, 19 Scorton St., Liverpool L6 4AS U.K.)

On June 5 Swedish dockers held up an ACL ship for 12 hours in support of the Liverpool men and have now given notice that they will implement a complete boycott of ACL ships. On May 13th ACL's Stockholm officewas occupied by a delegation from the Transport Workers Syndicate of the Swedish Workers Central organization (SAC) in Skarholmen.

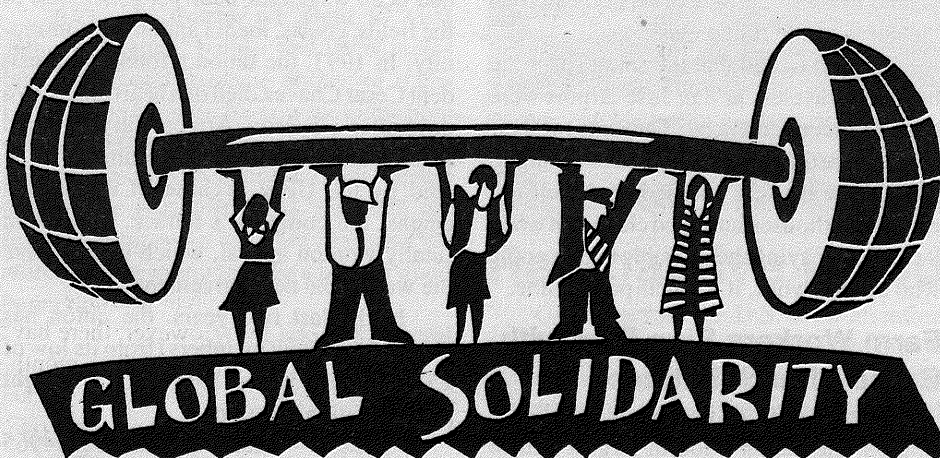
Ten SAC members refused to leave

Bolivian Police Kill Two Protesters

The Bolivian city of Cobija, in the far northern Amazon region near the Brazilian border, was under military control May 22 after clashes the night before between protesters and police. The teachers unions have been on strike in Cobija for two months, demanding the resignation of regional police commander Col. Eduardo Medrano for his role in repression last March. The latest protests broke out May 21 when Governance (Interior) Minister Carlos Sanchez Berzain arrived in Cobija to put an end to the protest movement by students and teachers. Sanchez Berzain, who gave his total support to Col. Medrano, was hit with a rock during the protests.

Police attacked, injuring many demonstrators and killing two: 14-year old Wilber Ferreira died on May 21 after police shot him with a rubber bullet, leaving a hole in his stomach that measured five centimeters in diameter, according to the forensic report; high school student Antonio Vaca Diez died early on May 22, also from injuries incurred during the police attack.

until ACL agreed to start negotiations. ACL contacted the police who threw out the delegation, but they continued the action outside the office. SAC members were able to talk with three ACL officials, who promised to bring pressure on the MDHC to settle the dispute. They also confirmed that the inter-



national actions against ACL had caused a lot of problems and they don't want to get involved in the conflict in Liverpool because they don't want to lose more money.

After several hours, during which 50 syndicalists surrounded the ACL office with banners, the SAC members withdrew. But the actions will continue if ACL does not stop running its cargo through scabby ports.

Following a successful joint union occupation of the "Churruca," the Andrew Weir vessel plying a weekly trade with Liverpool, the ship's captain was informed that continuing service to Liverpool during the dispute would result in continuing disruption in Bilbao, Spain. Andrew Weir are also facing a blockade of their Liverpool trade in Portuguese ports.

Several ships using the Liverpool port were targeted for inspections and union action by the International Transport Work-

Tanks Bar Unions From Congress

More than 1,000 Guatemalan military and police anti-riot troops – supported by four army tanks – surrounded the National Congress May 23 to prevent union activists from entering the building. The unionists, who are protesting a proposed labor law restricting the right of public employees to strike, instead picketed the surrounding area. A group of nearly 300 union leaders had peacefully occupied and then voluntarily abandoned the Congress building on May 21. On May 22, prevented by police from entering the Congress building, state workers peacefully protested outside.

Police Attack Strikers In Peru

Back in Peru, police attacked striking construction workers in central Lima during a 24-hour national strike on May 22 to demand wage increases. Union member Juan Wagner Acuna was wounded in the foot by gunfire, and 15 workers were arrested. The government outlawed the strike.

Peruvian teachers held a national 48-hour strike on May 22 and 23 to demand salary increases. Jose Ramos, leader of the Only Union of Peruvian Education Workers (SUTEP) said 90 percent of the country's 250,000 public school teachers participated in the strike. And Lima's street cleaning workers struck May 20 to protest plans to privatize the municipal service.

Weekly News Update On The Americas

ers Federation as part of its northern Europe week of action the week of June 3rd.

Direct Action in Marine Transport

Unions affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation have forced several owners of open-registry vessels in Hamburg and Rotterdam to sign ITF contracts setting pay rates and working conditions after a series of brief strikes and gangway occupations. Dutch dockworkers be-

gan a boycott of the Antigua and Barbudan flag Louise Brochard in Rotterdam June 4th. The owners initially refused union access to the vessel. The campaign has won several fleet agreements, including with Fairwind Ltd. and the Danaos line.

In Antwerp unions waged a boycott action against the Liberian flagged, German-owned CMB Antwerp which is presently crewed by Filipinos. The ship is owned by F.A. Vinnen & Co from Bremen and was blockaded June 3rd.

The most dramatic Rotterdam actions took place June 7 against the Antigua and Barbudan flag Tangier and Opdr Tejo. Access by the ITF crew to the waterside was prevented by the shutting of the gates and consequently the unions chartered a boat and boarded the vessel from the sea. The lawyer acting for the owners then agreed to negotiate agreements. Over 45 Dutch dockworkers boarded the German-owned ship, generating a lot of interest and publicity.

When the German owner of the Antigua and Barbuda-registered ship Angela J, Jungerhans & Co. Reedereiverwaltung, refused to allow a dockworkers delegation to board the vessel to meet with crew members, dockworkers stopped cargo handling and sat on the bollards to prevent the ship leaving. The Cyprus-based contractor supplying the crew quickly agreed to sign an agreement covering crew members.

Serbian workers fight for wage hikes

Striking court employees and health workers demonstrated in Belgrade May 28 to demand pay increases and better working conditions. About 1,000 protesters gathered outside the offices of the pro-government Independent Trade Union and complained their strikes were being ignored by the authorities and the state-controlled media.

Labor unrest over low pay and unpaid wages has been building as workers realize that the suspension of U.N. sanctions has not revived the almost lifeless economy. Striking tractor workers in Belgrade have not been paid since January.

"We want to live and work normally," Stevan Djordjevic, president of the strike committee of the Serbian Health and Social Workers' Trade Union, told Reuters. "We demand a 30 percent minimum wage increase." The minimum wage for health workers is 160 dinars (\$32) per month. According to official statistics, a family of four needs a minimum of 1,300 (\$260) a month to survive.

Workers' Struggles Heat Up in Vietnam

Thousands of peasants fighting to preserve their rice fields in Kim No, north of Hanoi, clashed with hundreds of Public Security cadres and army troops May 13.

The Hanoi government is selling the fields to Korean developers Daeha to build a luxury golf course for foreign vacationers. Given the general food shortage in northern Vietnam and offered no replacement fields to plant rice, residents of Kim No petitioned the government to change its mind. The request landed three villagers in jail.

Public Security cadres and army troops, fully equipped with tear gas, riot shields and electric prongs, approached the fields early in the morning May 13 and started to uproot rice plants. A village woman discovered the destruction in action and tried to stop the perpetrators. She was beaten unconscious and fell into a water hole and was later found dead at the site.

Awakened to what was happening, thousands of villagers vented their anger at the attackers with rocks, forks, sickles, poles and everything else they had. The melee lasted for several hours with some troops briefly detained by the villagers.

Kim No and surrounding areas were quickly surrounded by more troops. The four people sent by the village to negotiate with the government were promptly arrested.

Under the current Land Laws, the state is the sole owner of all land in Vietnam. People "borrow" land from the state for food planting. Foreign companies can buy land, but not the Vietnamese people.

Meanwhile, Vietnamese workers are finding that despite the existence of a Labor Law and the state-run General Labor Union, workers are left to fend for themselves in labor disputes. Knowing people's desperation to hold on to jobs, managers ignore regulations with the support of local "union" leaders, most of whom are Party members assigned by the government. Not even a fourth of foreign companies presently pay the minimum wage as required by law. (State-owned companies are exempt.)

Seeing no improvements after submitting written complaints for months, workers are resorting more and more frequently to strikes and slow-downs. In February 1996 alone, seven strikes at medium and large-sized companies were reported in Saigon.

On February 2, 200 workers at the Leaprex factory went on strike to protest reduced wages. February 5-7, workers at four companies – Ree Young, Sunbird, Vinataxi and Dai An – refused to work as long as managers continued cheating in calculating pay.

On February 10, all taxi-drivers at Davitaxi went on strike to protest new draconian rules imposing severe fines for drivers' mistakes while demanding much higher daily payments from drivers.

On February 23, over 200 workers at the Taiwanese-owned Chu-Hsing garment factory slowed down production while demanding management clearly define in writing payments for the labor of each garment item, pay their February salaries in full, and set a reasonable length for each work shift.

Also in February, labor strikes broke out in the neighboring provinces of Song Be and Dong Nai. On February 8, workers at the Korean-owned Daewoo electronic plant stopped production and refused to sign a new contract in protest of the company's low pay (averaging \$36 a month). For months, workers there were required to put in an extra two to three hours a day without pay. There was no financial assistance for workers who fell sick or could not work temporarily.

In Dong Nai province, 160 textile workers at the Dona Bochang plant struck to protest short pay.

Labor struggles in San Francisco Bay area

continued from page 1

to be reinstated.

Originally the SEIU had called for card check union certifications in all unorganized V/H facilities, which was adamantly resisted by the company. In the end, the union dropped this demand in exchange for supposedly facilitated NLRB elections.

(V/H, with its hardball history, is hardly a "benevolent despot" and is not going to take such election efforts lying down. They can be expected to try to subvert any such campaigns, within and outside labor law, particular where the mediating agency is the inept, procrastinating NLRB on whose rocky shores many a union ship has foundered.)

Vote at Kaiser Permanente

SEIU Local 250 is involved in another battle affecting 14,000 health care workers in Northern California, where there'll be a member vote shortly for a two-year contract recommended by a mediator in SEIU negotiations with the huge medical care giant Kaiser-Permanente, based in Oakland, Calif. This proposal would approve a wage freeze for highest-paid workers but would allow for some pay increases for those in lower income echelons. Some token bonuses are also in the package as bait. The union did get Kaiser to back off on major health insurance co-payments, but all workers except retirees would be charged \$5 for prescription drugs.

Janitors Blockade Airport

In another Bay Area action, 200 janitors represented by SEIU Local 1877 blocked the main entrance to San Jose International Airport for over a half-hour May 28 before cop tac squads intervened. A huge traffic jam resulted, as workers protested and called attention to the need for higher wages and benefits for 5,000 Bay Area janitors. Many of the janitors, mostly Latino men and women who work at the wealthy Silicon Valley high tech companies, are fighting for a master contract in negotiations with janitorial employers who contract with many

Organizing Teenage Workers

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with "Do Not Hire" written below them.

Still, word of the Limite drive had gotten out. The two were invited to speak on TV and radio shows, high school classrooms, college job fairs and labor conferences. The clerks at a Toronto-area Levi's 1850, a chain of Canadian stores that sells Levi Strauss products, were so moved by what they heard that they called the Garment union. Within weeks, every clerk in the store signed a union card.

The fast food sector is making even more headway: outlets of Pizza Hut, Harvey's, KFC and Tim Horton's Donut Shop have been organized in Ontario and British Columbia. Unions have started passing out labor information in the malls (illegal in the United States), and are helping educators come up with educational materials about workers' rights.

In the U.S., however, young people's work ghettos are still at the bottom of the unions' priority lists. John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, has launched a program through which college students will help organize older workers, not their peers in the McJobs sector. To survive, labor will have to go where the jobs are. A new study by the U.S. Department of Labor shows that only 6 percent of U.S. workers between ages 16 and 24 are union members (compared to 15.5% overall). In Canada, 18 percent of workers 17 to 24 are union members, compared to a 33% overall figure.

If teenagers are old enough to work in malls, they are old enough to unionize there. (based on article in the May/June *Ms.*)

Bay Area companies.

Demands include wage scales which consider the federal poverty threshold wage as being \$7.28 for a family of four. The area's standard pay now varies between \$6.27 and \$6.45 an hour.

Since separate contracts now in effect expired on May 31 and negotiations are going nowhere, the workers are taking a leaf from the successful Los Angeles area Janitors for Justice campaigns to take to the streets to raise hell and make themselves visible to their fellow workers and step on the corns of the ruling class.

It's just to bad that the smug suit-n-tie business travelers at San Jose airport were slightly inconvenienced. They expect their office carpeting to be vacuumed every night, their waste baskets emptied, and their executive shithouses scrubbed clean, but when it comes to paying the invisible night people who do this work, it's pinch-penny time.

Farm Workers Sign Pact with Bruce Church Lettuce

After an ugly 17-year battle with Bruce Church, the nation's fourth-largest lettuce

grower, the United Farm Workers finally got a 5-year contract covering 400 workers at the company's Salinas Valley operations. These workers do the stoop labor in the fields: lettuce cutters and packers, hoeing and thinning crews, irrigators and tractor drivers. The contract calls for a 13 percent wage increase: 4% the first year, 2% the 2nd through 4th years, and 3 percent the final year. The beginning wage of \$6.62 an hour will be \$7.23 by the year 2001.

The UFW struggle with Bruce Church had been wages for nearly a generation in the fields, courts, media and in the community. In 1993, the union's founding president Cesar Chavez died of a heart attack two days after a Tucson, Arizona jury awarded Bruce Church \$2.9 million in damages to be paid by the UFW because of its boycott against the company's lettuce. The union finally won on appeal, which helped pave the way to the new agreement.

In the last two years, the union has gained 5,000 new members (from its low of 15,000 in 1993) and has won 13 straight representation elections.

— Harry Siitonen, X324965

St. Louis Wobs Fight Nuke Bosses...

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fore Chernobyl, the industry swore that "Nuclear plants cannot explode."

Nuclear Fuel Down Your Highway?

Now, the same people who minimize Chernobyl and promised abundant cheap energy from nuclear power are telling us that there is no danger in transporting irradiated nuclear fuel across U.S. highways and railroads. Congress is currently considering legislation (S 1271 & HR 1020) to move irradiated fuel rods from power plants throughout the U.S. to a "parking lot" facility in Nevada. It is more than ironic that this happens as we observe the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. For both nuclear plants and nuclear transportation, governments promise citizens: "It can't happen here." Chernobyl shows that, despite such assurances, it did happen.

The nuclear industry disingenuously uses the term "spent" fuel rod, which implies that once uranium is used, it has lost most of its punch. Environmentalists use the term "irradiated" fuel rod to emphasize the fact that fuel rods which come out of a reactor are a million times more radioactive than when they were loaded into the reactor.

The industry claims that canisters which would contain the nuclear waste are "virtually indestructible." They fail to mention that canisters are only designed for collisions of up to 30 miles per hour. They also fail to mention that canisters are only designed for fires burning at less than 1475° F. Most important, they fail to mention that crash and fire tests repeatedly produce leaks in canisters.

According to the *New York Times* (3/31/96, p. 4), "The radiation released after the explosion at the reactor's core on April 26, 1986 [at Chernobyl] was nearly 200 times that of the combined releases from the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki." If bills before Congress become law, thousands of canisters of irradiated nuclear fuel, each carrying the radiological equivalent of up to 200 times the Hiroshima bomb, would pass through heavily populated areas.

Shipments of irradiated fuel would be on the same highways and railroads citizens use. St. Louis and Kansas City, because of their location, would be "hub cities" having an enormous quantity of nuclear waste going through them. The St. Louis Board of Aldermen, and the city councils of Webster

Groves, Hazelwood and Oakland have resolved that irradiated fuel rods should not be routed through the Metropolitan St. Louis Area. Similar resolutions passed in Los Angeles and Philadelphia.

Nuclear Workers

For decades, uranium miners and workers in nuclear power and processing plants have heard industry and government minimize or deny the effects of routine radiation exposure on birth defects, immunological system damage, and a wide variety of cancers. If transporting irradiated fuel becomes big business, entire new groups will become nuclear workers while having no say about what is happening to them.

The first will be truck drivers and railroad personnel involved with transporting irradiated fuel. Their exposure will depend on the age of the fuel rods (older rods are more radioactive) and how well sealed the canisters are. This daily exposure will occur regardless of accidents.

But, with 15,000 shipments over a 30-year period, accidents are a virtual certainty. The worst scenario would be a high speed collision with intense fire, resulting in radioactive gases and particles spewing into the air. A person standing three feet from unshielded irradiated fuel would receive a lethal radiation dose in 10 seconds.

Few if any U.S. communities have (or can afford) equipment to cope with a nuclear transportation disaster. Emergency workers such as firemen and ambulance drivers could be exposed to massive radiation. The danger to workers responding to a nuclear emergency is high. As Chernousenko described what happened to workers at Chernobyl: "Young recruits, 18-, 19-, 20-year olds, came to assist in the clean-up. Many died immediately. They were given no protective clothing. Why? I believe it was to show the world that it was not a big catastrophe; that it could easily be cleaned up."

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union calls for retraining workers so they can perform jobs of equal pay in socially useful areas. This should become a model for every union.

We cannot afford the luxury of believing government and industry fantasies about nuclear power. If our children and grandchildren are to have any future, we certainly

Assembly Lines Run Killing Pace...

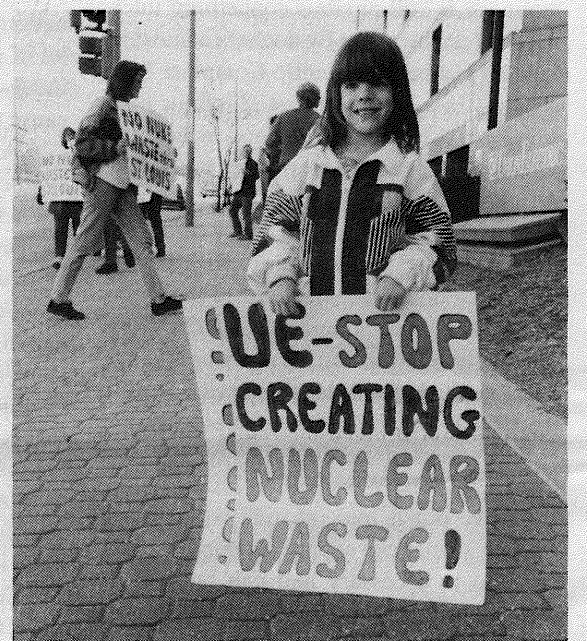
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getting worse. The pace has increased to between 55 and 65 cars an hour from an average of 45 a decade ago.

"Whatever I do, it's not enough for the company," Grills said. "The workload is causing so much stress on the floor." Three-fourths of GM workers said work was too fast, and that there were too few people to do it.

Wayne McGregor, a CAW health and safety director representing about 300 workers, said alcoholism is on the rise at his workplace, Brampton-based Ventra Door Handle Systems Inc., which supplies the Big Three with auto parts. "Things have gotten so bad, some people are turning to alcohol to ease the tensions," McGregor said, adding that the incidence of substance abuse has doubled over the past few years.

Hargrove said the findings are important to all workers, not just those in the auto industry. "This is a question for all of us in a civil society. Should this be the norm?" he asked. "No one has looked at it from the point of view of its impact on people."



Casey Tibbs wants a radiation-free future. April 25 picket. photo: Don Fitz

cannot afford to apologize for the work we do, especially when it is a threat to public health. Perhaps workers everywhere should be asking: "Should we really be doing what we are doing?" and "Is there some other work we could be doing which would be better for society?"

The radiation nightmare points to the need for unions to develop a real environmental awareness and for environmentalists to organize on the job.

— Don Fitz

[This article is based on information presented by the author at an April 25 talk at Preservation Hall in St. Louis.]

Two new titles from Monkeywrench

The fellow workers at Monkeywrench Press have added two new titles to their list. The first, *Women & Imprisonment in the United States: History & Current Reality* by Nancy Kurshan, is a 32-page history of the use of prisons to enforce women's subordinate role in U.S. society. The second, *Voltairine de Cleyre On Marriage*, collects two essays and a poem in which the turn-of-the-century anarcho-feminist argues that "marriage stales love, brings respect into contempt... and limits the growth of both parties..."

The pamphlets are \$2.50 each from Monkeywrench Press, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia PA 19143.

Work Hazards and Industrial Conflict, was \$10, now \$6

Today's Trendy Sweatshops

The Labor Department reported May 20th that it had found sweatshop-made products on the shelves of several of the U.S.'s leading retailers. J.C. Penney was notified for the fourth time in less than a year that it has purchased goods made in a sewing shop that failed to pay its workers the minimum wage and overtime.

Others receiving sweatshop goods were Talbots Inc., Macy's East, Specialty Retailers, Charlotte Russe and Claire's Boutiques. Specialty Retailers is the holding company for Palais Royal and Beall's stores. None of the retailers faces any penalties.

The National Retail Federation demanded that U.S. Labor Secretary Reich stop his "harassment by press release of law-abiding retailers," while J.C. Penney said it was "perplexed" by the Labor Department notice. The chain said suppliers had agreed to pay back wages to the workers caught violating minimum wage and overtime laws.

The retailers did business with sewing firms in Boston, Dallas and Los Angeles that owed more than \$245,000 in back wages to 294 workers. The largest case involved Truong Sewing, a Dallas garment contractor producing goods traced to J.C. Penney. The shop agreed to pay \$113,450 in back wages to 132 workers and \$30,000 in fines.

Dying for Kathie Lee

On Apr. 29 Charles Kernaghan of the U.S.-based National Labor Committee (NLC) testified to a U.S. congressional committee that the Global Fashion maquiladora (assembly plant) in Choloma, Honduras employed children to stitch clothes for Wal-Mart's Kathie Lee Gifford Collection, named after the host of a top-rated syndicated TV morning show, "Live with Regis & Kathie Lee." On her May 1 show, Gifford choked back tears and said she'd been unaware of conditions in the plant. But the next day, when a reporter asked whether she felt anguish over children being paid 31 cents an hour to sew clothes bearing her name, Gifford said: "No, I don't." Her husband abruptly terminated the interview. Wal-Mart spokesman Dale Ingram denied there were problems at the plant but said the operation had been moved to Nicaragua. Kernaghan says that conditions are even worse for maquiladora workers in Nicaragua.

Maquiladoras in Haiti are being managed by former members of two rightwing paramilitary groups, the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH) and the Tontons Macoute, set up by dictator Francois ("Papa Doc") Duvalier in the 1960s. "At Classic Apparel, which produces for U.S. companies, the chief of personnel is a former FRAPH person," Kernaghan said. "At a factory called Seamfast [Manufacturing], the owner is a former Macoute, and the workers tell us you go into his office and



he's there in his gleaming blue uniform with the red stripes [the Macoute uniform]. He's very proud of himself."

In the Free Trade Zone

The maquiladora industry is one of the few sectors doing well in Mexico since the current economic crisis began in December 1994. The sector grew by 6.6 percent between March 1995 and March 1996, while the number of employees jumped by 13% to 696,577. The maquiladoras import 98% of the materials they assemble, mostly from the U.S., so they do little to lift the rest of Mexico's economy, which has been devastated over the same period. Gross domestic product (GDP) fell 1% during the first quarter of this year, on top of dramatic declines in 1995, when the growth rate went down to an unprecedented -10.6% during the second quarter. The decline might have been worse if the government hadn't changed its method of measuring GDP this year, possibly shaving 0.5% off the number.

The crisis in the industrial sector "has caused a decline in working conditions for all kinds of laborers," the *New York Times* writes (5/8/96). "Safety inspections and maintenance of storage equipment are often the first functions to be postponed as a result of the crunch." On May 7 a factory making soap and cooking oil was leveled by an explosion in the eastern part of Mexico City, near the international airport. One person was killed and 41 wounded; the Federal District attorney general's office blamed the explosion on lack of maintenance.

The National Union of Regional Autonomous Peasant Organizations (UNORCA) says per capita consumption of corn, wheat, fruits and vegetables has fallen by 29% over the past six years. UNORCA charges that the two-year old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which

cuts tariffs on agricultural products, has ended the country's self-sufficiency in food and is putting 80% of Mexico's rural producers in jeopardy. Mexico will import 33% of the food it consumes this year, according to the group. Even children understand the depth of the crisis. A poll by Mexico City's conservative opposition daily *La Reforma* found that 74% of the city's children between eight and 11 consider the economic situation "very bad"; 30% think it is Mexico's biggest problem.

Contractors for the Walt Disney company are paying Haitian women as little as 12 cents an hour for sewing Pocahontas or Mickey Mouse pajamas; 18 cents less than the 30 cent an hour Haitian minimum wage. In 1994, Disney CEO Michael Eisner was paid approximately \$3,431.20 an hour.

U.S.: Ignoring the Minimum Wage

While Congress is fighting over raising the minimum-wage, many employers are busy violating it. Recent settlements with the Labor Department indicate that an egg farm in Connecticut paid "trainees" from Bulgaria less than the federally required \$4.25 an hour. A potato-packing house in San Jacinto, Calif., charged workers for gloves and other equipment, knocking them below the minimum wage. Used-clothing stores in the border town of Hidalgo, Texas, paid clerks \$10 a day.

And the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), which has been an active support of national efforts to raise the minimum wage, unsuccessfully tried to persuade California officials to exempt it from paying its workers the state's minimum wage. The organization wanted to make its staff work as unpaid "volunteers" after they had worked their regular shifts at minimum wage. (Perhaps ACORN staff need a union.)

ACORN sued, claiming the minimum wage requirement infringed on its right to express political views. ACORN attorney Steve Bachmann claims the organization has always obeyed the law. "We were hoping to get some latitude."

Employers try to circumvent the minimum wage laws by piece rate schemes (legal, but only if wages don't fall below the minimum) or by deducting charges for food, housing or equipment (the same).

Note to Contributors

We go to press the second Monday of each month, and need your copy a few days before that. Please double-check your copy for facts, as this will save time in editing. It's easy to misremember someone's exact name or title, so write it down and be sure.

Canada: Organizing Teenage Workers

As parental pay checks shrink, increasingly poorer young people are seeking waged work. Employers often prefer to hire very young workers because they don't know their rights – or are too scared to demand them. In Canada, 2.5 million workers between 15 and 24 are in the workforce; in the U.S. 6.5 million workers are between the ages of 16 and 19. In both countries, the largest employers of young workers are the retail sales and food industries.

Fast food and mall retail stores are notorious for regarding their sales clerks as being as disposable as their fashions, and fostering worker insecurity as a company asset. They justify minimum-wage, minimum-security McJobs on the grounds that teenagers are just working for spending money. Several Canadian organizing drives by teenage workers, however, show that young workers are as interested in living wages and benefits as any other workers.

The organizing drives started in 1994 near Toronto at Limite, a teeny-bopper clothing store with 47 outlets in shopping centers across Canada. A new manager at the Bramalea store posted a notice about sales quotas: "Anyone not averaging at least \$50 an hour is out of a job!" Clerks feared that the bosses' plan was to get rid of them and bring in even more desperate workers, willing to work unpaid overtime and give up vacations. One clerk, Nancy MacLean, daughter of a wood workers union activist, called a meeting that night in the mall's food court. Nine of the 11 women present decided to form a union.

The next day MacLean called the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union; an organizer came to her house just hours later. By evening, she was driving around the suburbs visiting her coworkers and getting union cards signed – which in Canada is enough to certify union representation. By the end of the night she had a 67% majority – enough to form Canada's first mall fashion retail union.

Meanwhile, in another suburb at the Limite Square One mall store, 19-year-old Tammy Gulati was also thinking union. Management there was also pressing for ever-higher sales, and also discriminating against black applicants. Having heard about the union effort at Bramalea, Gulati decided to call Nancy MacLean. She got the Garment Workers' number and began lining up her coworkers. Limite Square One was quickly unionized, with eight of the store's 11 workers signing cards.

Limite, of course, promptly fired both MacLean and Gulati. But at the time Ontario had a short-lived law on the books that allowed unions to get fired organizers back to work almost immediately, and they were back on the job in a couple of days with back pay and management apologies. After the most recent elections, the new provincial government changed that law to one closer to U.S. (anti) labor law.

In the U.S. firing organizers during a drive is also a popular union-busting tactic. One study suggests it happens in up to a third of all organizing drives. Though firing is against the law, there is nothing in U.S. law that says workers have to be reinstated speedily, allowing employers to drag out proceedings for months or years. "Our labor laws are designed to give the employer time to launch the Vietnam War," explains Andy Stern, the new president of the Service Employees International Union.

Having failed to bust the union, Limite shut down the Bramalea store and sold the Square One operation in early 1995. Many of the clerks have had trouble finding work in the industry; MacLean's and Gulati's pictures hung in the back of one Limite store

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Be a Wobbly — Join the IWW...

Real Democracy! All policy decisions are made by referendum. The IWW has just one (modestly) paid officer, the General Secretary-Treasurer. The 7-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the entire membership. All officers may be recalled by referendum. IWW workplaces and branches make their own decisions about bargaining and strategy.

To Join mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and first month's dues to IWW, 103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197, or contact your local delegate. **Dues:** Monthly income under \$800: \$5 per month; Income \$800-1700: \$9 monthly; Over \$1700: Dues \$12. Initiation Fee is same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as \$10.00

- ☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- ☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations.
- ☐ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

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Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker